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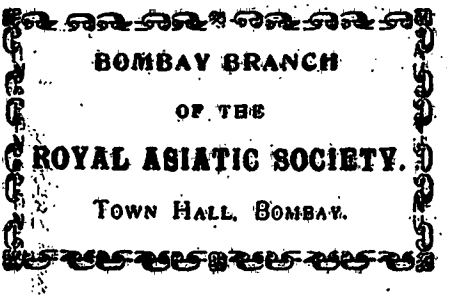

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THE

HISTORY OF FRANCE.

BY

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PREFACE.

HISTORIES of countries from first to last are, I fear, no longer popular. Few readers like to embark on so long a voyage, uninteresting at its commencement from barrenness, at its close from brevity. The narrator is preferred who undertakes to paint a single epoch, which he reproduces on a large canvas, so as to give life-like size and reality to every personage. But the merits and attractions of such works, however great, cannot dispense with the necessity of more continued and concise narratives of historical events. In these alone can be traced the great chain of causes and effects, and the circumstances pointed out which give a decisive tone and distinguishing colour to the fortunes and character of a nation.

This, no doubt, is history aiming at instruction rather than amusement, and appealing to the judgment rather than the imagination. It pre-supposes, too, that things are more powerful than men, and circumstances than individuals; that the age in its progress throws out the mind and the agent which work and complete its purpose, rather than that the genius

of the statesman or legislator can seize the helm and guide the bark to the goal indicated by his own prescience. Were this the case, portraiture would be history. I question the omnipotence attributed to the human intellect, and the importance assigned to individual idiosyncrasy. Time is an ocean, on which we float with much power over our course, but with little over the elements by and amongst which we are borne along.

The aggregate will, creed, and purpose of the minds of a nation form no doubt the paramount cause. But analysis could not dissolve them into a myriad of individual wills, much less concentrate them into one. The great events and achievements which mark the progress of a nation proceed from the first, whilst it were idolatry to look for them in the latter. Yet in these two great countries the belief in individualism prevails. Mignet declares broadly that the Reformation succeeded where it had a king to abet it, and failed where there was a sovereign to oppose it. French history does not corroborate this assertion. The Reformed tenets overran France and became masters of it under the Catholic Valois; whilst they were driven back and reduced to insignificance under the Huguenot Bourbon. In England, methinks, we malign ourselves and depreciate the national grandeur, when we attribute the success of the Reformation to the Tudors, or that of the democratic principle to Cromwell. The great peculiarity of English history, on the contrary, seems to be the activity and influence at all times of

the national mind, manifesting itself not merely in letters, but in religious conviction and political design. The Tudors on the whole spread their sails to the wind, and the Stuarts were lost in attempting the contrary.

In the history of France, the influence and working of the national mind are often so inapparent, that a monarch would have been puzzled who thought to consult it. It comes strongly in support of my theory to observe, that during such periods of syncope no great man ever made his appearance. Through long epochs, indeed, opinion in France there was none, if one will not acknowledge as such a worship of expediency, and a tendency to fall prostrate in despair before whatever power came forward to play the bold bully and insist on dominating. True, the nation was apt to awaken at intervals to a sense of a condition so abject, and to play the maniac in shaking off its fetters and asserting its rights. But the vigour seldom survived the access of rage; purpose was lost in frenzy, and the great object of humanity in the imposing sound and glitter of merely fanciful words.

Such disquisitions, however, would require not a preface but a volume. It has been here indulged in merely to vindicate the cause and necessity of narratives of things, at least as an indispensable background to the representation of characters and persons.

The period embraced in the present volume forms the most prominent and stirring portion of French history, anterior to the revolution. It was an age

fertile in distinguished men, however little they may have achieved beyond negation and repression. It only shows that circumstances were too strong for genius, and that the national mind did not sufficiently inspire or support its great men. Those who initiated the Reformation, and strove to make it prevail in France, were marked by superior capacity and strength of character; yet they failed, and the failure to emancipate the intellect of the country in this one prime respect brought on the failure to establish any system of public liberty. The history of this double failure is comprised in the present volume, and offers the most important subject of study. To do it justice surpassed, no doubt, the powers of the Author as well as the space which his plan allowed him to command. But the landmarks have been carefully laid down, and the great facts of the epoch so narrated and connected as at least to afford the student a full view of the time, and to facilitate, if desired, more minute researches.

In the course of the Author's reading and inquiring, he has been fortunate to light upon some new and interesting sources of information. The collections of diplomatic and other correspondence connected with France, and preserved in the State Paper Office, make some revelations which will be new to French historians. Not the least curious is the fact of Cecil's attempt to substitute Alençon for Anjou on the throne of France: a letter in the great minister's handwriting attests the plot. Buckingham, too, appears to far greater advantage in these papers than French

memoir-writers have allowed him. The MSS. Life and Biography of Nicolas Pithou, in the *Bibliothèque Impériale*, the Letters of M. de Seurre, during his first embassy from Charles the Ninth to Queen Elizabeth, preserved in the library of Grenoble, and the bundles of Simancas Papers marked *Francia*, and kept in the French archives, for the inspection of which the Author is indebted to the kindness of M. de Beauchesne and M. Teulet, have furnished new and interesting materials. The correspondence of the Spanish envoys in Paris, after and before the St. Bartholomew massacre, to be found in the Simancas papers, throw especial light upon that mysterious catastrophe. These also illustrate the *Ligue* and Spanish influence during its operation; but the *Manuscrits de Mesmes*, in the *Bibliothèque Impériale*, even more fully elucidate the events of that time. The Author has consulted the great collections of MSS. in the *Bibliothèque Impériale*, and other Paris libraries; but they form an ocean in which, not merely a life, but lives might be spent. All that was possible was to dive into such epochs as needed and promised enlightenment from these vast sources.

CONTENTS

OF

THE THIRD VOLUME.

CHAPTER XXIII.

	Page
Antagonism of Ideas replaces that of Persons	1
Conflicting Principles of Absolutism and Liberty; the one fixed in the South, the other pervading the North	2
Difference of the Protestant Movement in France and in England, as well as in North and South of France	3
Comparison between Henry the Eighth and Francis the First	4
Character of the Cardinal of Lorraine	5
„ of the Duke of Guise	6
„ of Catherine of Medicis	7
The Bourbons	10
Coligny and his Brothers	12
Prosecution of Dubourg	14
His Execution, December 1559	16
Movement of the Huguenots	17
La Renaudie	18
He plans the Conspiracy of Amboise	19
Its Outburst	20
And Failure, March 1560	21
Condé accused of Complicity	22
Queen Elizabeth's knowledge of the Plot	24
The Chancellor De l'Hôpital issues the Edict of Romorantin	25
Assembly of Notables meet in August at Fontainebleau	27
Guise and Coligny in opposition	28
Seizure of La Sague, and Disclosure of the Intention of the Huguenots to rise. Their attempt upon Lyons	29
King of Navarre and Prince of Condé enter the Court, and the latter arrested	31
Trial of the Prince interrupted by the Death of the young King Francis the Second, December 1560	32
Accession of Charles the Ninth	33

Page
Shrewd Saying of Queen Elizabeth - - - - 34
Assemblage of the Three Estates - - - - 35
Their Opinions - - - - - - 36
Edict of Orleans - - - - - - 37
The Provincial Estates - - - - - 39
The Triumvirate - - - - - - 40
King's Coronation - - - - - - 41
Temporary Submission of the Court to the Catholic Triumvirate 43
The Colloquy of Poissy, October 1561 - - - 44
Its Failure - - - - - - - 45
Collisions between Catholic and Protestant - - - 47
The Protestant Synod of St. Foy - - - - 48
Riot of St. Medard; Assembly of St. Germains - - 49
Tolerant Edict of January 1562, issued by De l'Hôpital - 50
Perversity of the King of Navarre - - - - 51
Massacre of Vassy, March 1562 - - - - 53
Condé abandons Paris to Guise - - - - 55
Huguenots erect their Standard on the Loire - - - 56
Iconoclast Fury - - - - - - 58
Protestants have the Advantage at first - - - 59
Causes of this, as of Catholic Resuscitation - - - 60
French Nobles' Mistrust of the French Peasant as a Soldier - 62
Progress of the Civil War - - - - - 64
In Provence - - - - - - - 65
At Toulouse - - - - - - - 66
Combat of Châteaudun - - - - - 67
Condé's Treaty with Queen Elizabeth - - - 68
Siege and Reduction of Rouen - - - - 69
Battle of Dreux, November 1562 - - - - 70
Duke of Guise besieges Orleans - - - - 72
Is assassinated by Poltrot - - - - - 73
Treaty of Amboise, March 1563 - - - - 75

CHAP. XXIV.

Impossibility of Accord betwixt the Creeds - - - 78
Cardinal of Lorraine's Views for Reforming the Roman Church 79
He abandons them and rallies to the Decree of Trent - - 80
Elizabeth and Catherine - - - - - 81
Non-execution by the Catholics of the Conditions of the Treaty of Amboise - - - - - - 83
Catherine declares the King of Age, August, 1563 - - 84
Court proceeds to Champagne, March 1564 - - - 85

Page
Scene with Pithou - - - - - - 86
Interview of Bayonne, 1565 - - - - - 87
Edict of Moulins - - - - - - 89
Alva marches a Spanish Army through the East of France to the Netherlands, 1567 - - - - - 90
Huguenot Alarm and Outburst - - - - 93
They try to seize the King and fail - - - - 94
Battle of St. Denis, November 1567 - - - 96
Treaty of Longjumeau, March 1568 - - - - 99
A mere Trap to seize the Huguenot Chiefs - - - 100
They escape to La Rochelle, August - - - - 101
Battle of Jarnac, March 1569—Death of Condé - - 102
Siege of Poitiers - - - - - - 105
Battle of Moncontour, October 1569 - - - - 106
Succours and Counsel of Elizabeth - - - - 109
Treaty of St. Germains, August 1570 - - - 111
Proposed Marriage between the Duke of Anjou and Queen Elizabeth - - - - - - 112
Mission of Cossé to La Rochelle - - - - 114
The King plots with the Huguenots against Spain - - 116
Coligny at Court; Marriage between Henry of Navarre and the King's Sister agreed upon - - - - 117
Quarrel between Coligny and Catharine - - - 119
The Cross of Gastines - - - - - - 120
Was the Massacre of St. Bartholomew's Eve premeditated ? - 123
Anjou retreats from the English Marriage - - - 125
His Brother Alençon substituted as a Suitor - - 126
Death of Jeanne D'Albret - - - - - 127
Charles's Dissimulation - - - - - 128
Seizure of Mons and Valenciennes by the Huguenots - 129
Surprise and Defeat of their Partisan Genlis - - 130
King irresolute - - - - - - 131
Catharine dissuades him from the War - - - 132
The Marriage of Henry of Navarre, August 17, 1572 - 134
Coligny shot at and wounded - - - - 135
The King's Visit to him - - - - - 136
The Council preceding the Massacre - - - 138
Charles gives the Order - - - - - 139
Massacre of St. Bartholomew's Eve, August 24, 1572 - 140
The Duke of Guise declines the exclusive Responsibility of it - 146
Opinions of Europe - - - - - - 147
Massacre in the Provinces - - - - - 148
Execution of Bricquemont - - - - - 150
Reply of Walsingham - - - - - 151
Anjou besieges La Rochelle, February 1573 - - 152

Page
He is elected King of Poland - - - - 153
Treaty of La Rochelle - - - - - 154
Duke of Alençon plots against his Mother - - 156
His Plot discovered - - - - - 157
Arrest of Montmorency; Trial of La Mole - - 158
Death of Charles the Ninth - - - - 160

CHAP. XXV.

Rise of the Middle Party, of the Politiques - - 161
Catharine's Cruelty - - - - - 162
Anjou in Poland; his Escape from it - - 163
Catharine's Advice to him - - - - 164
Death of the Cardinal de Lorraine - - - 166
The King's Marriage; Damville's Proclamation - 167
Flight of Alençon from Court - - - 168
Truce, November 1575 - - - - 170
Escape of King of Navarre - - - - 171
Peace of Monsieur, April 1576 - - - 173
Origin of the League - - - - - 176
Doctrines of the Lawyer David - - - 178
Assemblage of the First Estates of Blois, December 1576 - 182
King strives to defeat the League by assuming the Lead in it - 184
The Huguenots crushed in the South - - - 186
The Peace of Bergerac, September 1577 - - 188
Growth of Religious Indifference - - - 190
Foundation of the Order of Saint Esprit - - 192
The War of the *Amoureux*, or the Gallants' War - 193
Peace of Fleix, November 1580 - - - 194
The King's Brother in the Low Countries; his Death - 195
Joyeuse and Epernon - - - - - 196
Resuscitation of the League in 1584 - - - 199
Renewal of the Civil War - - - - 202
Catharine's Efforts to negotiate - - - 204
Condé's Attempt upon Angers - - - - 206
Interview between Catharine and Henry of Navarre - 208
Battle of Coutras, September 1587 - - - 210
The Duke of Guise defeats the German Auxiliaries of the Huguenots - - - - - - 212
The King strives to set aside Guise - - - 214
Who beards him in the Capital, May 1588 - - 216
The Barricades - - - - - - 218
The King flies from Paris and reaches Chartres - 219
But finally succumbs to Guise and agrees to his Terms - 220

Page
The Estates assemble at Blois, October 1588 - - - 223
Guise and the League depend more on the Middle Classes than the Nobility - - - - - - 227
The King driven to meditate the Assassination of the Duke - 229
He causes the Murder to be perpetrated on Christmas Eve 1588 231
Death of Catharine of Medicis, 1589 - - - - 232
Her Character- - - - - - - 233
Explosion in the Capital - - - - - 235
The Council of Union ; the Duke of Mayence, Guise's Brother, Lieutenant-General - - - - - 237
The Nobility and Gentry rally to the King - - - 240
Henry of Navarre's Declaration - - - - 241
Treaty of Alliance between the two Kings, April 1589 - 243
Mayence attacks the Royalists and Huguenots united at Tours 245
The royal Armies threaten Paris from St. Cloud - - 246
Henry the Third assassinated by Jaques Clement, August 1589 247

CHAP. XXVI.

Henry the Fourth King, but not recognised by all the Royalists 249
The late King's Friends demand his Abjuration - - 250
Henry's difficult Position - - - - - 251
The Wane of Protestantism and its Causes - - - 253
Henry gives Hopes of his Conversion - - - - 254
He marches to the Coast to get Succours from England - 255
Battle of Arques, September 1589 - - - - 257
Henry carries the southern Suburbs of Paris - - - 259
His growing Popularity and Success - - - - 261
The Cardinal of Bourbon declared King by the League - 262
Mayenne puts down the civic Chiefs of Paris called the Seize - 263
Battle of Ivry, March 1590 - - - - - 264
The King's Army before Paris - - - - 267
Its Sufferings from Famine - - - - - 269
The Prince of Parma compels Henry to raise the Siege and enter the Capital - - - - - - 273
Council at Mantes to consider Henry's going over to the Catholics, July 1591 - - - - - 277
Pretension of Spain to have the Infanta declared Queen of France - - - - - - - 278
Siege of Rouen by advice of Elizabeth - - - - 280
The Seize take and behead three of the Judges of Parliament - 281
Mayenne's Anger and Retaliation - - - - 282
Prince of Parma marches to raise the Siege of Rouen - - 284

Page
His success in this, April 1592 - - - - 286
The Prince escapes from Henry by passing the Seine - - 287
Catholics convoke Estates in Paris for the Purpose of electing a King, January, 1593 - - - - - 290
Arrogance of the Spanish Demands - - - - 293
Conference at Suresne between Henry and the Catholic Leaders 294
Henry summonses a Council of Divines at Mantes - - 295
The Spanish Envoy misses his Opportunity - - - 296
Mayenne offers to have the Infanta proclaimed on the Promise of her espousing a French Prince to reign conjointly with her 297
Henry pronounces his Recantation in the Cathedral of St. Denis July 1593 - - - - - - - - 299
His Reasons for the Act - - - - - 300

CHAP. XXVII.

The new King's Character; he is the great Restorer of the monarchic Principle - - - - - - 302
Scinding of the Nation into two Classes and two Religions - 304
Dissolution of the Estates of the League - - - 306
The chief Leaguers, with the exception of Mayenne, rally to the King - - - - - - - - 307
Appeals of Parties to Publicity - - - - 308
Henry makes his Entrance into Paris, March 1594 - - 310
Siege and Capture of Laon - - - - - 312
Submission of the Duke of Guise - - - - 313
Henry declares War against Spain, January 1595 - - 314
Combat of Fontaine Française - - - - - 315
The Spaniards defeat the French near Dourlens - - 316
And capture Cambray - - - - - - 317
The Pope absolves and becomes reconciled to Henry, September 1595 - - - - - - - - 318
The King's Objurgations to the Parliament - - - 319
Discontent of Elizabeth with Henry - - - - 321
She offers to succour Calais; this being refused, the Spaniards capture it, April 1596 - - - - - 322
The English Queen lends Henry Money, but sends Essex against Cadiz rather than succour the French; Henry inclines to come to Terms with Spain - - - - 324
Assembly of Notables at Rouen, November 1596 - - 327
The Council of Reason - - - - - 328
Spaniards surprise Amiens, March 1597 - - - 329
Henry besieges them in it - - - - - 330

Page
And recaptures it in September - - - - 331
Spain and France enter into Negotiations for Peace - - 333
The King reduces the Duke of Mercœur in Britanny - - 334
His Treatment of the Huguenots - - - - 335
Their Synods and Demands - - - - - 337
The Edict of Nantes, April 1598 - - - - 332
Its unsatisfactory Nature - - - - - 342
Negotiation at Vervins - - - - - 343
Mission of Sir Robert Cecil - - - - - 344
Signature of the Treaty of Vervins, May 1598 - - 345
Death of Philip the Second - - - - - 346
Resistance to the Edict of Nantes - - - - 347
A French Army conquers Bresse from the Duke of Savoy - 349
Henry's Marriage with Mary de Medicis, December 1600 - 352
Birth of the future Louis the Thirteenth, September 1601 - 352
Biron's Treason - - - - - - - 354
His Arrest and Trial - - - - - - - 356
His Execution - - - - - - - 357
Complicity of the Duc de Bouillon - - - - 358
Religious Policy of Henry and of his chief Councillors - - 359
Expedition against Sedan - - - - - 361
Sully's Negotiations with the Huguenots - - - 362
Reduction of Sedan - - - - - - 364
Henry's Designs against Austria - - - - 365
Sully's Visit to Elizabeth - - - - - 366
Sully's subsequent Mission to King James - - - 368
Henry coquets with Religion - - - - - 369
Truce between Dutch and Spaniards - - - - 370
Toledo's Proposals, 1608; Peace between Spain and Holland, 1609 371
View of the whole Struggle between the Religions - - 372
Affair of Cleves - - - - - - - 374
Henry regains the Alliance of Savoy, and wins that of Vienna 376
The King enamoured of the Princess of Condé, who is carried off to Belgium by her Husband - - - - 376
King resentful, collects an Army and prepares to invade Juliers 377
Fear and Anger of the ultra-Catholics - - - - 378
Design of Ravaillac - - - - - - 379
Henry assassinated, May 1610 - - - - 380
Character of the Monarch and of his Reign - - - 381

CHAP. XXVIII.

Marie of Medicis declared Regent - - - - 385
Dismissal of Sully - - - - - - - 386

Page
The Regent's Council - - - - - - 387
Marie resolves to make Peace with Spain - - - 388
Marie's Favourites, Concini and Galigai - - - 389
Duels and Ferocity of the Courtiers - - - - 390
Oppression and Diminution of the Huguenots - - - 391
Causes of the latter - - - - - - 393
Change in the Nature of Religious Controversy - - 394
The Protestant Grandees—Sully, Bouillon, Rohan - - 395
Louis the Thirteenth affianced to Anne of Austria, 1612 - 396
The *Barbons*—Villeroy, Sillery, and Jeannin - - - 397
The Secession of the Grandees from Court in 1614 - - 398
Treaty with them at St. Menehould - - - - - 399
Assemblage of the Three Estates, October 1614 - - 400
Their different Pretensions - - - - - 401
Quarrels between the Orders - - - - - 403
State of Finances - - - - - - 404
Richelieu first appears as Spokesman of the Clergy - - 405
His Address - - - - - - - 406
The Regent goes South to receive the Infanta - - - 407
Condé, at the Head of an Army of Huguenots, seeks to intercept their Return - - - - - - 408
Condé makes his Peace, and sacrifices the Huguenots, May 1616 409
D'Ancre makes himself odious to the King - - - 410
Conspiracy against him - - - - - 411
Regent arrests Condé - - - - - - 412
Richelieu for the first time in Office, 1616 - - - 413
Assassination of the Maréchal D'Ancre, March 1617 - - 414
End of Marie de Medicis' Power - - - - 416
She is compelled to quit Paris and the Court - - - 416
Luynes assumes Power; His Cruelty to Eleanor Galigai; Assembly of Notables at Rouen in December - - 417
French Administration Hispanified - - - - 418
The several *Conseils* - - - - - - 419
New Government determined to deprive the Bearnese Protestants of their Ecclesiastical Property - - - 420
Marie of Medicis escapes, February, 1619 - - - 422
She is joined by Richelieu - - - - - 423
The Grandees conspire in her Favour - - - - 424
The King and Luynes march to reduce both them and her in Angers - - - - - - - - 425
Grandees repair to the King at Poitiers, Sept. 1620, Terms being granted to Marie - - - - - - - 426
Embassy and Proposals from the Emperor Ferdinand the Second 427
Massacre of Protestants in the Valteline - - - 428
King marches into Bearn and reduces the Huguenots - - 429

Page
The Rochellois Protest - - - - - 430
Siege of Montauban, May 1621 - - - - 431
King obliged to raise the Siege - - - - 431
Death of Luynes - - - - - - 433
King hurries from Paris, attacks and beats Protestants under Soubise in the Sables D'Olonne, 1622 - - - 435
The Inhabitants of Negrepelisse massacred - - - 436
King lays Siege to Montpellier - - - - 437
It surrenders on Conditions, October 1622 - - - 439
Vieuville's Ministry; A League with Venice and Savoy to liberate the Grisons and Valteline from the House of Austria, Feb. 1623 - - - - - 440
Treachery towards the People of Montpellier - - - 441
Vieuville introduces Richelieu to the Council, April 1624 - 442

CHAP. XXIX.

Commencement of Richelieu's Power; Its Nature at first - 443
His despotic and secular Tendencies - - - - 445
Negotiation of Marriage between Charles the First and the Princess Henrietta - - - - - - 447
Vieuville arrested and Richelieu sole Minister, Aug. 1624 - 448
Plan of League for humbling the House of Austria - - 449
Treaty with England; Expedition to the Valteline - - 451
Richelieu backs out of his Engagement with respect to Mansfeldt - - - - - - 452
Fall of Breda, 1625 - - - - - - 453
Failure of the Italian Expedition - - - - 454
Soubise's Capture of Blavet - - - - - 456
Buckingham in Paris - - - - - - 457
Defeat of Soubise - - - - - - 458
Cruelty of Louis the Thirteenth - - - - 459
Estrangement of French and English Courts - - - 460
Buckingham subsidises Denmark - - - - 461
England guarantees the French King's Promises to the Huguenots, Feb. 1626 - - - - - 462
King makes Peace and gives up the Valteline in despite of Richelieu - - - - - - - 463
The Quarrel between the King and his Brother - - 464
Arrest of Ornano - - - - - - 465
Execution of Chalais, Aug. 1626 - - - - 466
Richelieu's Scheme of Naval Supremacy - - - 468
Assembly of Notables in Paris, Dec. 1626 - - - 469

Page
Richelieu's Mode of dealing with Finance - - - 470
Quarrel about English Queen's French Followers - - 471
Bassompierre's Mission to London - - - - 472
Louis prepares to attack La Rochelle - - - - 473
Enmity and Reprisals between France and England - - 474
Buckingham at the Isle of Rhé - - - - 475
Siege of La Rochelle; Richelieu's Dyke - - - 476
Failure of English Succour - - - - - 478
Surrender of La Rochelle, Sep. 1628 - - - - 479
Affair of Montserrat - - - - - - 480
King forces Pass of Susa and reduces the Duke of Savoy, April 1629 - - - - - - 481
Massacre of Privas - - - - - - 482
Reduction of the Cevennes - - - - - 483
And of all the Southern Huguenots - - - - 485
King's Brother Gaston retires to Lorraine - - - 487
Rival Efforts of Cardinal Berulle against Richelieu - - 488
Richelieu subsidises Gustavus Adolphus - - - 489
Richelieu, with Title of Prime Minister, marches into Italy - 490
Mazarin's Interference - - - - - - 491
Brings about Peace - - - - - - 492
The Emperor Ferdinand's Ultra-Catholicism - - - 494
Treaty of Ratisbon, Oct. 1630 - - - - 496
The King's dangerous Illness at Lyons - - - 497
Queen makes use of it to try and ruin Richelieu - - 498
The Day of Dupes, on which the Cardinal triumphs, Nov. 1630 500
Queen-mother got rid of - - - - - - 501
Richelieu crushes both the Noblesse and the Estates of the Provinces - - - - - - 503
Capture and Sack of Magdeburg, 1631 - - - 504
Gustavus defeats Sully at Leipzig - - - - 505
Montmorency's Rebellion - - - - - 506
Marillac's Execution - - - - - - 507
Montmorency defeated at Castelnaudari, Sept. 1632 - - 509
His Execution - - - - - - - 510
Alliance of France and Holland - - - - 512
Spaniards unsuccessful in the North, 1635, 1636. They advance to the Oise - - - - - 513
Richelieu rescues Alsace - - - - - 515
Affairs of the Savoy Succession - - - - 516
Richelieu attacks Roussillon - - - - - 517
Catalonia in Insurrection 1640 - - - - 518
A French General Viceroy of that Province - - - 519
Siege and Capture of Arras, Aug. 1640 - - - 521
Richelieu's Tyranny - - - - - - 523

Page
And enormous Expenditure - - - - - 524
His Patronage of Letters - - - - - 526
His Severity to Queen Anne - - - - - 528
The Platonic Amours of Louis; Madlle. de la Fayette - 529
Queen's Communication with Spain and the Cardinal's Enemies discovered; her Humiliation - - - - 530
Chance procures her Reconciliation with the King; Birth of the future Louis the Fourteenth, September 1637 - 531
Cinq Mars - - - - - - - - 532
Battle of La-Marfée; Death of Soissons, 1641 - - - 533
Conspiracy of Cinq Mars - - - - - 535
His Treaty with Spain - - - - - 536
His Arrest at Narbonne, 1642 - - - - 539
His Execution and De Thou's - - - - 540
Death of Richelieu, December 1642 - - - - 541
King's Death, May 1643 - - - - - 544
Character of Minister and Monarch - - - - 546

CHAP. XXX.

Anne of Austria Regent - - - - - 554
The Rivals for Ministerial Power - - - - 556
Condé's Victory at Rocroy, - - - - - 557
Mazarin succeeds to the Power of Richelieu - - - 559
The *Importans* - - - - - - - 560
Their Defeat - - - - - - - - 561
Emery, Finance Minister, creates serious Discontent in the Capital - - - - - - - - 562
Parliament opposes Mazarin - - - - - 566
The Toisée - - - - - - - - 567
Arrest of the Three Judges, 1645 - - - - 568
Exploits of Condé and Turenne - - - - 570
Commencement of the Negotiations for the Treaty of Westphalia 571
Insurrection of Massaniello - - - - - 574
Condé's Victory of Lens, 1648 - - - - 575
Peace of Westphalia, 1648 - - - - - 576
Mazarin's Obstructions in the way of Peace with Spain - 578
Increasing Discontent of Parisians and Paris Parliament - 580
The Companies unite against Mazarin, May, 1648 - - 583
Duke of Beaufort escapes - - - - - 584
Meeting and Resolution of the Judges on the Salle St. Louis - 585
Marshal Meilleraye declared Finance Minister - - 586
Arrest of Broussel and Commencement of the Fronde - - 587

Page
De Retz - - - - - - - 588
Court gives up Broussel and withdraws from Paris - - 589
Condé brings Troops to Paris and mediates - - - 590
The King and Queen retire to St. Germains, whilst Condé blockades Paris, January 1649 - - - 592
Constitutional Opinions of Cardinal de Retz - - - 594
Treaty of Ruel, March - - - - - 596
Molé - - - - - - - 597
Quarrel between Beaufort and the Courtiers - - - 598
Condé quarrels with Mazarin - - - - - 599
The Prince arrested, January 1650 - - - - 600
Resistance of Bordeaux - - - - - 601
The Court before that Town - - - - - 602
Which it enters, Condé being obliged to withdraw - - 603
Duke of Orleans turns against Mazarin, under De Retz's Influence - - - - - - 604
The Prince liberated from Prison, and Mazarin obliged to quit the Kingdom, 1651 - - - - - 606
Queen attempts a Reconciliation with Condé - - - 608
Mazarin, though absent, prevents it - - - - 609
Scene between the Prince and De Retz in the Palace of Justice 610
La Rochefoucauld - - - - - - 611
Assembly of the Noblesse - - - - - 613
Louis the Fourteenth declared of Age, September 1651 - 615
Condé in Guienne - - - - - - 616
Return of Mazarin, January 1652 - - - - 617
Turenne takes the Command of the King's Forces against Condé 619
Negotiation for Peace - - - - - - 620
Duke of Lorraine comes to aid Condé - - - - 621
Is compelled by Turenne to retreat - - - - 622
Attack of Condé in the Faubourg St. Antoine by Turenne - 623
The Daughter of the Duke of Orleans opens the Gates and fires the Guns of the Bastille on the Royalists - - - 624
Condé changes the City Authorities - - - - 625
Massacre of the Hotel de Ville - - - - 626
Court revokes Parliament - - - - - 628
The Duke of Lorraine marches to Paris - - - 629
Is again baffled by Turenne; King re-enters Paris; End of the Fronde, October 1652 - - - - - 630
England and France - - - - - - 631
Parliament compelled to submit to the King; Leaders of the Fronde banished - - - - - - 632
Imprisonment of De Retz - - - - - 633
Condé and his Sister the Duchess of Longueville at Bordeaux; this City obliged to capitulate to the Court - - 634

Page
Condé and the Spaniards besiege Arras - - - 635
Turenne lays Siege to Valenciennes ; the War lingers - 636
Finances under Mazarin - - - - - 637
Mazarin and Cromwell - - - - - 638
The Cardinal promises Dunkirk to the Protector - - 639
Idle Scheme of Mazarin to get Louis the Fourteenth elected Emperor - - - - - - - 640
By affecting to negotiate a Marriage with the House of Savoy, Mazarin induces Philip the Fourth to offer to Louis the Fourteenth the Infanta, Nov. 1658 - - - 641
Inclination of the King for Mazarin's Nieces; Treaty of the Pyrenees, Nov. 1659 - - - - - 642
The Royal Marriage, June 1660 - - - - 643
Death of Mazarin, March 1661 - - - - 644
His Character - - - - - - 645.

CHAP. XXXI.

Character of the new Monarch - - - - 647
His Habits and Relations - - - - - 648
Louis purchases Dunkirk, and triumphs over Spain and Rome 649
Battle of St. Gothard, on the Danube, Aug. 1664 - - 650
La Vallière; Eminent Divines - - - - 651
The First Minister of Louis - - - - - 652
Fouquet and Colbert - - - - - - 653
Disgrace of Fouquet and Condemnation ; End of 1664 - 655
Colbert's Financial Reforms - - - - - 656
Louis revives Pretensions to the Supremacy of Charlemagne 658
His Claim to Brabant, by the Right of *Evolution* - - 659
John De Witt - - - - - - - - 660
His Negotiations with Louis ; War of Holland and England - 661
Death of Philip the Fourth, 1666 - - - - 662
Louis invades the Low Countries, 1667 - - - 663
Germany alarmed ; Treaty of Partition with Austria - 664
The Triple Alliance, Jan. 1688 - - - - 665
Conquest of Franche Comté - - - - - 666
Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle - - - - - 667
Versailles - - - - - - - 668
French Policy becomes bigoted - - - - 669
King's Hatred of the Dutch - - - - - 670
Colbert's commercial Enmity to them - - - - 671
Relations between England and Holland - - - 673
Treachery of Charles the Second - - - - 673

Page
Secret Treaty between Charles and Louis - - - 674
Counsels of Leibnitz - - - - - - 675
Louis had determined to go to War in 1671; Reasons for his first forming it - - - - - - 676
Occupation of Maesyk, May 15, 1672 - - - 677
Passage of the Lech, called by the French the Passage of the Rhine - - - - - - - 678
Capture of Naarden; The Sluices opened by the Dutch - 679
First Assault on the De Witts; Dutch make Offers of Submission - - - - - - 680
Louis rejects them - - - - - - 681
Missions of Halifax, Buckingham, and Arlington - - 682
Treaty for the Defence of Holland urged by the Emperor, and the Elector of Brandenburg, July 1672; Insurrection in Holland - - - - - - - 683
Murder of the De Witts; The Prince of Orange rejects all Proposals of Surrender - - - - - 684
French troops obliged to march from Holland into Germany, where Turenne baffles the Imperialists, and drives the Brandenbergers to their Electorate - - - 685
The Emperor's General captures Bonn; Desertion of England from the French King's Alliance; Peace between England and Holland, Feb. 1574 - - - - - 686
Arrest of the Prince of Furstenberg - - - - 687
Combat of Sinzheim - - - - - - 688
Battle of Seneffe - - - - - - 689
The *Arrière-Ban;* Turenne's Exploits at Ensheim (October) and at Mulhausen - - - - - 691
Battle of Fehrbelin, 1675 - - - - - 692
Death of Turenne, July 1675 - - - - 693
French lose Philipsburg, but take Friburg; Disaffection of Bordeaux - - - - - - 694
Revolt of Messina; Death of De Ruyter, 1676 - - 695
Battle on the Peene, April 1677 - - - - 696
Louis's Army in 1678 - - - - - 697
King lays Siege to Ghent - - - - - 698
Treaty between England and Holland; Close of 1677; but Charles relapses to France - - - - 700
The Dutch conclude Peace with France, May 1678 - - 701
Treaty of Nimeguen, Aug. 1678 - - - - 702
The Emperor adheres to the Treaty, 1679 - - - 704

HISTORY OF FRANCE.

CHAPTER XXIII.

FROM THE ACCESSION OF FRANCIS THE SECOND TO THE TREATY OF AMBOISE IN CHARLES THE NINTH'S REIGN.

1559—1563.

THE history of France and of adjoining countries, hitherto, has concerned their physical and political rather than their intellectual development. It has been narrated how each country grew strong and battled for superiority with its neighbours, and how each class, within the national limits, struggled for ascendency and authority, won, lost, or maintained them. With the exception of the crusades and their era, these contests, whether domestic or international, were for dominion and power, the result of individual ambition, or of a national thirst for aggrandisement. No higher motive impelled to war, or animated the conflict. The rivalry between Charles and Francis, which fills the earlier half of the 16th century, and attracts interest as the first great and general strife of European nations, was but a contest for personal superiority, and, notwith-

CHAP. XXIII.

standing its vicissitudes, a bootless one. We now enter upon a period in which the antagonism is not merely between persons or countries, but between ideas, and where political and religious sentiments are arrayed and engaged in hostile conflict. One of these principles, briefly expressed as that of absolutism in politics and religion, was enthroned in the south, in Spain and Italy, over which the unvarying policy and the inflexible will of Philip the Second, and of the Popes subservient to him, reigned uncontrolled. In opposition to his stern and stolid purpose of enchaining the world to its most unenlightened past, arose in the north the antagonistic principle of the right and expediency of the people taking part, in proportion to their intelligence and capacity, both in the choice of religious belief and in the guidance of political action.

The historian who undertakes to depict the struggle between these principles would facilitate his task, and heighten its interest, by taking his stand upon one side or upon the other, and being thus able either to select for the prominent figure of his narrative the gloomy but grandiose Philip, or demand sympathy for the heroic characters of Queen Elizabeth and the Prince of Orange. This is denied to the historian of France, a country interposed as a kind of neutral ground between North and South; and serving at one time as an obstacle to any decisive collision between the contending parties, at another, as the battlefield on which they fought. So divided were the French, that religious differences soon assumed amongst them the shape of civil war, although fanaticism was more often the pretext than the motive, political and personal interest, more than conscientious belief, inspiring Catholic and Huguenot leaders, and expediency, rather than philosophy or humanity, suggesting at last the wisdom of toleration.

The principal difference of the great protest against

Rome, in France and in England, was, that in the latter country it burst forth from the people, and even from its humblest classes, full grown and mature. From the beginning of the century, the English prelates sent to public penance or the stake numbers who openly questioned the truth and validity of the sacraments as administered by Rome. It was some time ere Calvin proceeded to this length. In France the Reformation was rather a heaving of intellect and education in the universities seeking to throw off the incubus of scholastic theology. The numerous professors, however, lived by this; and the students, with the rank of graduates, acquired a right to be promoted to the benefices of the Church. Such interests soon expelled the reformers, and compelled them to take refuge in provincial colleges, or at the courts of princes or princesses, who took pleasure in learning, and in the freedom of religious inquiry.

The populations of the south of France, gathering more in towns, and enjoying more of civic habits and social communication than the northerns, were ripe for such ideas, which spread like lightning amongst the middle classes, and lit up the smouldering flame of long past dissent, even amongst the lower. In the north this was not the case. Feudalism still reigned there, and formedthe universal tenure and jurisdiction; whilst, in the south, not only had towns preserved a large portion of municipal rights, but the estates of Languedoc, of Provence, and of Guyenne met, voted supplies, and expressed grievances, with a regularity unknown elsewhere. Hence, the Latin race of the south of France cherished that Protestantism which the more Teutonic population of the north was not sufficiently developed or instructed to reverence generally. It was a similar division to that which prevailed in England, where the southern counties rallied round the throne, and accepted its reforms; whilst the northerns regretted their

CHAP. XXIII.

monasteries, and considered the dissolution of them as a breach in that feudalism which they still revered.

Whilst French Protestantism was thus striking its roots throughout the south, the Sorbonne, or Faculty of Theology in the French university, came forward as the source and centre of orthodoxy, supported not so zealously by the Church, for many of the bishops refused to persecute, as by certain of the judges. Francis as often overruled as he gave the reins to their zeal. He strove to distinguish between the literary and the religious reformation. He approved of the mockery which exposed the falsehood of the clergy's pretended monopoly of wisdom and knowledge, though he deprecated any attack upon essential superstitions. He might be indulgent to the scholar's doubt or the courtier's sneer, but was indignant at vulgar unbelief. He had no temptation to despoil a church whose dignities were in his gift, and whose wealth was at his command. And as he was himself a lay Pope, the rejection of religious belief implied a right to dispense with loyal duty. Heresy and treason, indeed, became so completely identified in the minds of Francis and of his son Henry, that they as eagerly suborned and supported both in the dominions of their enemy as they punished and proscribed them at home.*

The impartiality of Francis and that of Henry the Eighth were about equal, their mode of showing it very different. For whilst Henry encouraged theologians, and allowed both sides to form parties and select champions in his very court, Francis would tolerate no eminence less innocent than that of the arts. The English king developed the middle class mind, sowed the Bible broadcast amongst his people, and advanced hand in hand with the Commons House of Parliament. Henry contributed to

* Tavannes says of Henry the Second, *Qu'il haissait les Calvinistes plus pour son estat que par la réligion.*

the making of his nation; Francis to the nullification of his.

Even what Francis most resolutely sought, he failed to accomplish, the prevention of those religious parties being formed in court and state which embarrass and menace the throne. Around his son, the dauphin, grouped those nobles whom Francis sought to repress — Montmorency, the Guises, and others — who, in hatred to the Duchess of Etampes, affected unbounded zeal for the interests and the tenets of the Church. They became predominant under Henry the Second, and although the war with the empire, and consequent alliances with the German princes, interrupted that proscription of Protestants and confiscation of their property, which delighted and enriched the zealots, these resumed persecution when circumstances permitted. And foremost of their ranks soon appeared the personage who was to be the chief guide and politician of the French Roman Catholic party for the ensuing critical quarter of a century.

Charles, known as the Cardinal of Lorraine, born in 1525, acquired at the College of Navarre the reputation of a brilliant scholar. Young as he and his brother were, Francis observed their greed of wealth and honour; and though he appointed the young churchman to give lessons to his son Henry *, he, at the same time, bade the latter beware of his preceptor. Employed in embassies to Rome by the new king, he soon became the link between the two courts, and began to devise means for putting down the Reformers. They had increased so immensely during the reign of Henry the Second, that lay judges and prelates were both found lukewarm in condemning; and when both were associated for that purpose, their zeal was not increased. † Cardinal Charles, in consequence, recommended the Spanish

* Matthieu, Hist. of France.

† Edict de Châteaubriand.

CHAP. XXIII.

Inquisition, which not only provoked the resistance of parliament, but augmented the influence of the Reformers in that body. Although thus eager to deal summarily with religious heretics, the cardinal redeemed his severity by some humane opinions. Whilst the Constable Montmorency, the man of chief influence under Henry the Second, would have persecuted learning and letters as leading inevitably to heresy*, the cardinal protected them, founded a college at Rheims as the best defence against that evil; and whilst abetting the inveterate hatred of the Sorbonne against religious innovation, he supported and protected the learned Ramus†, who ventured to expose the futility of the Aristotelian logic, and of the education founded upon it. There was, in fact, much of Cardinal Wolsey in the Cardinal of Lorraine, the French prelate at a later period entertaining those schemes for strengthening the Church by improving its organisation and instruction which Wolsey had conceived.

Francis, Duke of Guise, brought to the support of his brother, the cardinal, the first military character of the age. The capture of Calais was alone sufficient to warrant it. Of little learning, and of an intellect exclusively practical, he implicitly followed his brother's lead, even so far as at times to bend his stiff nature, which of itself could not have swerved or yielded an iota of creed, principle, or prejudice. Of fair complexion‡, noble bearing and features, the beauty of which was enhanced by a scar, Guise looked, as none of the Valois after Henry the Second did, in all a king. Nor was he wanting in those chivalrous feelings, which fitly animate such a frame, until bigotry and concessions to the ecclesiastical morality of his brother, the cardinal, succeeded in effacing them.

The ascendency of the Lorraine brothers, as soon as

* Regnier de la Planche.

† Waddington, *Ramus, sa vie.*

‡ *Blond et blanc,* says Margaret of Valois.

the new reign should open, was secured by the marriage of the young monarch with their niece, Mary, Queen of Scots, whose beauty exercised over him all the influence upon which they had reckoned. The first act of Francis the Second was to entrust the financial and civil administration to the Cardinal of Lorraine, the command of the army and the conduct of military affairs to the Duke of Guise. The king announced this to a deputation from the parliament.* And when Montmorency, who as constable had attended the remains of the late King, repaired to St. Germains to pay his court, Francis was taught to receive him coldly, to dispense with his active service, and beg of him to retire to enjoy his leisure at Chantilly. The constable was compelled to cede the grand mastership of the king's household to Guise, his son being appointed marshal by way of indemnity.† Diana of Poitiers was obliged to withdraw from court, and give up her beautiful château of Chenonceau to the queen mother in exchange for the inferior one of Chaumont. The marriage of her daughter with the Duc d'Aumale, one of the Guise brothers, saved her from a greater degree of vindictiveness or spoliation.‡

Catherine of Medicis would gladly have acted a bolder part. La Planche describes her as one who had overlooked the game of politics for twenty-two years, and never took part in it till she was mistress of all its rules, and of the character of the players. She had causes of dislike to the constable§, and she limited her

* Mémoires de Castelnau. Lettres de Laubespine in Négociations sur François II. Documens Inédits.

† The Constable was also deprived of several estates, especially that of Compiègne, given him by Henry the Second; but he received a promise of 50,000 crowns to help to pay his ransom. The Cardinal of Chatillon, who writes this, excuses the court, by adding, that it treated everyone in the same fashion. MSS. Bethune, 8674.

‡ Throgmorton tells of D'Aumale's anger at her treatment. Forbes' *Elizabeth*, i. 91.

§ Enumerated by Davila: one was that he hated foreigners and Florentines.

CHAP. XXIII.

interference for the present to securing the appointment of able and moderate men. Such were De Tournon* and Olivier. The latter she made chancellor instead of Bertrandi, who was a creature of Diana of Poitiers†, and he began early to anticipate the policy of De l'Hôpital, in seeking to repair injustice and mitigate persecution. Recent chancellors, especially Poyet, had withdrawn whatever causes interested them from parliament to the Great Council. Olivier at once abolished that practice, and prohibited the Great Council from trying questions between private persons.‡

The picture drawn of Catherine of Medicis by her cotemporaries is not prepossessing. With an olive complexion, an aquiline nose, large prominent eyes, and projecting lips, she had, after her son's accession, being about forty years of age, grown fat and unwieldy. This she increased by excesses of the table, which she subsequently counteracted by exercise, hunting the stag with her son, Charles the Ninth, or sharing in the fatigues of the siege of Rouen.

Although the religion of the day as taught and practised at the papal and other courts, had been brought to such a pass, that one might be devout whilst indulging in all kinds of immorality and crime§, Catherine does not seem to have had even this devotion. Her sole thought, her exclusive ambition, was to reign, and religious considerations were thus with her altogether subservient to political ones. But perceiving how rotten was the

* Suriano says, Catherine esteemed De Tournon for his talent, but suspected his too great leaning to the Pope.

† La Planche, Etat de la France.

‡ Pasquier, Recherches, liv. ii.

§ There needs no other proof than the difficult cases, stated by the Jesuit confessors in their books, and exposed by Pascal. "Dices an qui malo fine laboraret, ut ad *aliquem occidendum*, vel ad insequendam amicam, vel quid simile, teneatur ad jejunium." "Call to mind," says St. Beuve (Histoire du Port Royal), commenting on this, "that the age offered examples of strange penitents, such as Louis the Eleventh, Philip the Second, or Henry the Third, for whom it was a very serious affair to fast the day after a murder committed by them, or a licentious adventure indulged in."

Church, how gross its abuses, and how repugnant much of what it clung to, was to the awakened reason and even religious sense of the age, she looked upon Protestantism as likely to prevail, at least in its mildest forms.

Catherine leaned to Protestantism, not only from this belief in its probable success, but from the desire of finding in it and in its partisans a counterbalance to the ultra Catholics, who, headed by the Guises, and supported by the King of Spain, monopolised power during the reign of Francis the Second, and disputed it afterwards. But her conduct to both parties was dictated by no feeling or conviction deeper than those of political expediency, which prompted her to use the one and resist the other, by those arts of dissimulation and intrigue, which had been taught and perfected in the Italian school.

Although the political authority of Catherine was frequently questioned, and even at times set aside, she still remained during her sons' reigns mistress of the court, which she sought to enliven and adorn by the patronage of music and the drama, as well as by the beauty of her maids of honour. She did not scruple to use their charms to the profit of her political designs, thus lowering the standard of female virtue. Indeed, she ignored the chivalrous honour of the gentleman as much as the corresponding one of her own sex. Bred in Florence after the extinction of its freedom, Catherine neither knew the civic virtues of the republic, nor those incident to feudal and highborn pride. In this epoch of transition from the traditional chivalry and unquestioned religion of the ancient knight, to the more enlightened honour and more educated convictions of the modern gentleman, the court of France, instead of being a bridge to connect them, became, under Catherine and her sons, a morass or quicksand between them, in which aught like principle in religion or morals was

CHAP. XXIII.

drowned, and from which Catherine herself was unable to extricate or save the only wisdom she conceived, that of moderation amidst the fury of extreme factions.

The natural rivals to both the Guises and Catherine were the Bourbon brothers. Francis the First had given the heiress of the D'Albrets to the Duc de Vendome, but with little more than the county of Bearn and the empty title of King of Navarre. Francis and Henry alike shrank from aiding him to recover any portion of his Spanish provinces; and Antoine had then endeavoured to obtain them, or Milan in exchange, with large promises of allegiance and attachment from Charles the Fifth and Philip the Second. Such intrigues, of which Philip did not probably preserve the secret, increased the alienation of the French court from Antoine. But still he was the first prince of the blood, and as such more entitled to the guardianship of the young king than the Guises. Montmorency wrote to him to come to Paris, and uphold his claim. But the King of Navarre, angry with the constable for abandoning his interests in the late treaty with Spain, delayed his journey, and seemed more anxious to make terms with the Guises than oppose them.*

The King of Navarre was formidable not only from his rank, but as the most illustrious person that had embraced in France the tenets of the Reformers. He was always attended by one of their clergy, had lent them the great hall of his palace at Nerac to preach in, and on more than one occasion had shown himself their champion and friend.† His wife, Jeanne D'Albret, had inherited from her mother a strong disgust of Rome, and though Brantome says she loved gaiety more than religion, the mother of the future Henry the Fourth became not the less a staunch Protestant. The King

* The Granvelle Papers. D'Aubigny. De Thou.

† De Bèze. La Place, *Commentaires.* Castelnau.

of Navarre was far from being endowed with his wife's constancy. Self-indulgent and irresolute, ambitious to recover either his position at the French court, or his wife's inheritance in Spain, without knowing how to set about either, Antoine was carried away by every caprice and every breeze, treacherous to his friends, and only innocuous to the enemies of his house.*

His next brother, the Prince of Condé, also professed the Protestant creed. The constable had given him in marriage his niece Eleanor, daughter of Louise de Montmorency, Countess of Roye, one of those strong minded women who maintained the superiority of the reformed doctrines, not only in her family, but at court, where she even influenced the opinions of Catherine. The Countess of Roye, mother of the Princess of Condé by her first husband, had three sons by her second marriage, the Admiral Coligny, Lord of Chatillon, D'Andelot, and Odet, Cardinal of Chatillon. She instilled into all her strong persuasions, which they did not shrink from avowing. The fit leader of the Protestants was unquestionably Coligny. He was a man of those deep convictions of which the Bourbons were incapable. Brave as a soldier, and skilled as a commander, Coligny, on more than one occasion, showed himself the military rival of Guise.† Austere in habits,

* Calvin characterises Navarre as a liberal maker of promises, but without constancy or faith. *Adde, quod totus venereus est.*

† It was Coligny who, in 1550, made the first serious attempt to organise the French infantry, of which he and D'Andelot took the command, as a service which the gentry declined. What the infantry previously were may be gathered from the ordinances which Coligny drew up, and which Henry the Second sanctioned. It forbade the captains enticing soldiers one from the other, or soldiers forsaking one captain for another. The soldier who deserted his post, and was not ready when called on, was to be passed through 'the pikes.' Captains were bound to obey sergeant-majors in their duty as well as soldiers. The object of the ordinance was to render the French infantry permanent, like the cavalry. Brantome says, that Coligny's reformation of the foot soldier saved a million of lives, as they were nothing better than Arabs before it. See the Regulations in *Histoire de la Maison de Coligny*, vol. ii. Preuves.

CHAP. XXIII.

pure in life, Coligny was strongly imbued with the spirit of the patriot. The policy he recommended to Catherine and to her government was to show forbearance and mildness to the Protestants, and thus avoiding civil discord, direct the resources and armies of France to drive the House of Austria from the Low Countries. Catherine was struck by the grandeur of his views, and prized Coligny as one of those frank characters which were never actuated by private ambition.*

Coligny knew well that he could not pretend to lead a party in which the princes of the House of Bourbon numbered themselves. He saw that the weak nature of the King of Navarre, who was ever the dupe of his own ambition, or of some designing favourite, was not to be depended on. But the Prince of Condé was of a more generous and chivalric nature. He was connected with Coligny by marriage, and the admiral himself undertook to make this prince be considered the chief of the party, and to endow him with the sagacity and purpose required for the task.†

Coligny, however, was far from foreseeing thus early the necessity of an appeal to arms. Indeed, the admiral, as well as Calvin, entertained doubts of the righteousness of upholding the cause of religion by the sword. When, therefore, the prince and the nobles who professed the reformed doctrines met at Vendome, which the King of Navarre had reached on his way to court; and when the Prince of Condé, the Vidame de Chartres, and D'Andelot proposed at once raising forces and attacking the Guises, the admiral, with the King of Navarre and the Prince of Porcien, deprecated any such extremity. In lieu of it, Coligny advised that the King of Navarre should proceed to court and claim the authority due to his rank.‡ Antoine de Bourbon had not the address or courage to perform such a part.

* Regnier de la Planche. † Brantome. ‡ Davila.

His purposes were betrayed by those whom he trusted. Received with slight at court, he knew not how to vindicate his dignity; and on a letter of Philip of Spain being read to him, in which that monarch declared he considered the enemies of the Guises as his own, the King of Navarre abandoned opposition, and consented to escort to Spain the Princess Elizabeth, sister of Francis, already betrothed to Philip.* He hoped thus to procure a personal interview with the Spanish monarch, and the opportunity of perhaps acquiring, if not Navarre, at least some compensation for it.† The Prince of Condé had been previously removed from court on the pretext of a similar errand. He was sent to Brussels on a mission to Philip, ere that potentate embarked for Spain. But the Guises gave the prince scarcely sufficient money for his expenses, and Condé, becoming the guest of the Prince of Orange at Brussels, imbibed strong cause of enmity both to the Spanish and French courts. CHAP. XXIII.

Having set aside the constable, humbled the Bourbons, won over the Maréchal St. André‡, attached Brissac by the government of Picardy, taken from Coligny, and heaped honours as well as wealth upon their followers, the Guises proceeded to destroy the Protestants, who were their personal and principal enemies. The Cardinal of Lorraine's first care was to resume the project, conceived and acted upon in the preceding reign, of ejecting from the Parliament of Paris the judges, who either had adopted or were lenient to Protestantism. He reappointed the commission for trying Anne Dubourg, and the other judges whom they had committed to prison. The provost of Paris was

* De Thou.

†† How ill-founded were his hopes soon appeared, when Philip refused to allow him to enter Spain.

‡ St. André had realised a large fortune from the confiscations of Protestants—a mine which he had worked in concert with Diana of Poitiers. The promise of the Guises that he should not be called to account was sufficient to gain St. André. La Planche.

CHAP. XXIII.

enjoined to allow no preaching without leave from the archbishop*, and rigorous measures were taken to prevent secret meetings for worship. Dubourg had refused to answer the judges appointed on the commission, and pleaded his right to be tried in full parliament. His demand being rejected, he claimed privilege as having taken some degree of holy orders. Failing in this, he again demanded to be tried by his brother judges, setting aside those who had shown themselves his enemies. Dubourg, however, did not relax in his profession of Protestant tenets, which he held to the extreme, not only differing from Rome, but maintaining that the Pope was Antichrist. And hence, though the Chancellor Olivier admitted some of Dubourg's challenges and appeals, the cardinal, as well as the zealots amongst his brother judges, were bent upon his sacrifice.†

The Protestants in the commencement of the reign applied to Catherine de Medicis. She had given them good words, they said, in Henry's time, and they now hoped she would prove a new Esther.‡ Her reply was that they must refrain from meeting, and live quietly and without scandal, on which condition she would protect them. When they perceived that Dubourg's life was threatened, they renewed their application to her, but certainly in terms little calculated to conciliate. It was a favourite argument with the Huguenots, that any disaster that befel their enemies was a judgment of Heaven, and they now asserted to Catherine that Henry's sudden death was the vengeance of God for his severity to Dubourg. She was shocked, very naturally, and gave them a sharp reply, saying

* Régistres du Conseil du Parlement, t. lxxxii. MSS. Bib. Impériale.

† Mémoires de Condé, tom. i. Régistres du Conseil du Parlement, tom. lxxxii. MSS. Bib. Im.

‡ La Popelinière. Claude Haitôn says that when Henry the Second, in his choler, purposed to rase Meaux, Catherine prevented him.

what she was willing to do for them was from consideration, not belief in their doctrines.*

The Cardinal of Lorraine was, however, checked by the reluctance of Catherine and of her chancellor to proceed to the extremities he desired.† In order to overcome such opposition, his spies not only denounced a variety of conventicles in Paris, but signalled out one in the Place Maubert, in which they declared the grossest licentiousness was practised. Depositions were made to this effect, which, upon being sifted, proved utterly false.‡ But they enabled the cardinal to issue edicts that whatever house harboured such conventicles should be demolished, and the persons arrested in them punished with death, whilst the judges of the Châtelet might condemn them without appeal.§ Such atrocity, which was not confined to menace, roused the ire of the Protestants; and Minard, one of the chief judges most violent against Dubourg, was shot one evening as he was returning from the Palais de Justice.‖ A Scotchman named Stuart was suspected of the act, and also of the intention to take advantage of it to set fire to the capital, in order to liberate the prisoner. Torture elicited nothing from him. But lest such fears should be realised, it was resolved to hasten the execution of Anne Dubourg. An attempt to which the Chancellor Olivier was probably no stranger, had been made to

* The habit of the Protestant preachers to attribute all benefits to themselves and misfortunes to their foes, as judgments of God, is not unjustly reprobated by Montaigne and by Pasquier.

† At this time the Cardinal of Lorraine appointed a friar to preach before the queen, suspecting her of leaning to Protestantism. Forbes' *Elizabeth*, i. 274.

‡ The informers, two discarded servants of the Prêche, especially accused Madame Trouillat and her daughter, who fully refuted the vile calumnies. Vie de Nic. Pithou. MSS. Bib. Imp. Collection de Champagne, 106. See also De Bèze.

§ Edicts of Villers-Coterets and Blois in September and November 1561. Fontanon. A hundred crowns reward was promised to the informers.

‖ A messenger of the Inquisition, proceeding to the court at Chambord, was also murdered. Régistres du Conseil du Parlement.

CHAP. XXIII.

save him, by first spreading the report that he repented of his obstinacy, and then making his counsel announce it. Preparations were already made for hurrying his acquittal, when a letter was brought into court from Dubourg in prison disavowing his advocate, and declaring himself ready to die for the truth. Even his friends could no longer oppose the wishes of the martyr, and could not prevent his immediate condemnation. All they obtained was that he should be strangled previous to his being burned. His execution took place in the Place de Grève two days before Christmas (1559). A gallows was erected over the pile of combustibles, and the aged judge was strung up and hanged ere it was set fire to under him; the victim piously announced that he died for his faith as a Christian. The sacrifice of a man so eminent as Dubourg, and the courage with which he provoked and underwent his fate, had the effect of encouraging as well as exasperating the religionists. The circumstances of his death, the cruelty and ignominy with which he was treated, the words of patience and piety which he uttered, were circulated in a pamphlet from one end of the kingdom to the other, and formed one of those publications which excited and inspired the religionists, and which the persecutors vainly sought to proscribe and repress.*

To extirpate even tolerance from the bench of justice was not sufficient for the Guises. Their aim was to expel it from all office, and even from existence in town or country. As the king returned from Rheims and stopped at Esclairon, he appointed a man named Moreau commissioner, with an inquisitor and a royal procureur, for hunting out the Protestants of Lorraine. They began by imprisoning all the inhabitants of Vitry who would not attend mass. Measures equally stringent were adopted elsewhere. Since the inauguration

* Vie de Nicholas Pithou. De Bèze.

of their religion in the solemn synod held in the last year of Henry's reign, the numbers and union of the Protestants had largely increased. In Dauphiné they had taken possession of the churches. From the Rhone to the Garonne there was scarcely a town which did not inaugurate a prêche. The Catholics of Dauphiné, sanctioned by the parliament of Grenoble, had concerted with the Duke of Savoy, an extermination of the Vaudois, when the death of the king occurred to interrupt it. Marshal Villars had been sent to Languedoc, where his first feat was to occupy Aigues Mortes and hang all the Huguenot ministers.* This alarmed and aroused the Protestants of the south, the submission which it momentarily caused being speedily broken by an assembly of the delegates of sixty Protestant churches on the ruins of Mérindol. Here it was resolved to raise troops, and prepare for resistance. Similar discontent pervaded Languedoc and Guyenne, whilst the countries on the Loire came to be more irritated than honoured by the king's presence. Francis had been ordered thither by his physicians; unwholesome spots had appeared upon his face and person, and it was observed that he was obliged to hold his mouth open to breathe. The people said he was leprous; and the rumour ran that Francis was ordered to take baths of the blood of young children. Such reports were as extravagant as those invented and accredited by the Cardinal of Lorraine respecting the immoral conduct of the Protestants at their meetings. Still they served to irritate the young king, and the Guises were thus enabled to execute their severe edicts. They commanded domiciliary visits throughout Paris, which the Protestants at first resisting, blood was spilt. But the cardinal's spies and sbirs were the more numerous and active. The

* Villars' account. MSS. Colbert, 27.

CHAP. XXIII.

rumour of meat having been eaten of a Friday in a house sufficed for the capture of the inhabitants, the seizure and sale of its furniture; and numbers of Reformed families were thus either thrust into prison or driven from the capital.* The same system was pursued in the provinces, especially at Poitiers, Toulon, and Aix†; and a general feeling sprang up amongst the Reformers of the necessity of resistance. Another meeting of the chiefs took place; but they still deprecated war; and at length their impatient followers resolved on moving without them.

A gentleman of Perigord, named De la Renaudie, who had been in exile in Switzerland on account of a process in which he was nonsuited and imprisoned, and whose relatives had suffered persecution and spoliation, returned secretly to France, and summoned the Protestants to send deputies to Nantes to consider of a common mode of action. They came from each province, were persuaded to immediate action by the emissary's eloquence‡, and agreed to furnish 500 men each, who, with him at their head, might surprise the king at Blois, and rescue him from the Guises. La Renaudie, no doubt, gave it to be understood that he acted in the name, and with the sanction of the Prince of Condé, who was thus considered the "mute captain" of the enterprise. Coligny, however, remained a stranger to it; and Calvin's letters show his disapproval of the movement, and the low opinion he had of its leader.§

This meeting and engagement took place on the 1st of February, 1560, the execution of the project being fixed for the month of March. The Guises had warn-

* La Planche.

† Ibid.

‡ Harangues de la Renaudie, MSS. Fontanieu, 292. They are also given by De Thou.

§ J'ai toujours dit que si le fait me déplaisait, la personne De la Renaudie me dégoutait encore plus. —*Calvin to Coligny.* Bonnet's Collections of Calvin's Letters, t. ii.

ing before that time *, and the king was removed by them from the palace of Blois to the strong castle of Amboise. Coligny and his brother were summoned thither, and came without hesitation. Catherine, from a wish to avoid civil war, took advantage of their presence to seize some authority; and by their and her counsel the king issued, early in March, an edict, granting pardon and indulgence to all, save conspirators and traitors, setting forth, "That sedition and conspiracy being preached by Genevese of low condition, and many arrested who were accused of it, the king, having conferred with his mother, consented to pardon the past at her desire, and in order not to stain the first years of his reign with blood.† Condé also came to Amboise, but it is more than probable with the intention of favouring from within the castle the designs of the conspirators in their attack. In consequence of the removal of the court, the day for the enterprise was deferred; but the Guises were fully informed of every circumstance. La Renaudie had disclosed it to his host in Paris, one Avenelles, and he to a secretary of the Cardinal of Lorraine.‡

The first body of conspirators showed themselves under Castelnau § and Mazères, those who had been deputed to Nantes by the Huguenots of Gascony and Bearn, in the suburbs of Tours, on the 14th of March. Although their arms were concealed beneath their cloaks, they were challenged by Sancerre, who had been sent there by the court. They defied him at first, but thought fit afterwards to dismiss the soldiers, the

* Letters from the Guises to the constable in February show their foreknowledge of the plot. MS. Bethune, 8674. See also Throgmorton's letter of March 7, in Forbes. Castelnau says that the Cardinal of Lorraine was warned by Granvelle and by a gentleman of the Duc de Nevers.

† Printed copy in Fontanieu.

‡ Mémoires de Castelnau; La Place, &c.

§ A baron of Gascoigne, of 10,000 francs revenue. Throgmorton's letters from Amboise, March 21, 1560, in Forbes.

CHAP. XXIII.

chiefs, repairing to the château of Noisay, between Tours and Amboise, where they expected to meet La Renaudie.* Instead of his coming, the Duke of Nemours appeared the next day suddenly at Noisay, and seized Mazères, who was loitering without the château. Castelnau shut himself up within, not being attended with more than twenty-one followers, chiefly officers.† Nemours had brought 500 lances from Amboise and invested the castle. Castelnau, summoned to surrender, declared that he and his friends had come with no intention of offering violence, but merely in order to present a remonstrance to the young king. Nemours observed that if such were the case they had better come to court, and he gave his word of prince that no harm should befal them. They surrendered, but had no sooner entered Amboise, than they were committed to prison.‡

La Renaudie, who had not expected the outburst so soon, hastened to repair the disaster of Castelnau. He ordered a band of his followers on foot to cross the forest and meet him at Amboise, whither he himself marched with a certain force, and where he hoped to unite with others concealed in the cellars of the town, and even in the château itself. In crossing the forest, the scattered bands of conspirators were surprised by the cavaliers of the court, and dragged, most of them, prisoners into Amboise.§ Two days after (the 18th), La Renaudie himself fell in with a troop of the victorious cavalry, commanded by his cousin

* Account published in Memoirs of Condé.

† Laubespine's letter to the Constable of the 19th, from Amboise. MSS. Bethune, 8675.

‡ La Place.

§ Whilst the French Protestant writers allege that those taken on the 16th were treated with the utmost severity, and for the most part hanged, Throgmorton, who was at Amboise, says that "the fifty captives, a great number being artificers, were taken before the king, and all pardoned and dismissed by him save four." Yet the journal of Bruslart says that thirteen were executed on the 17th.

Pardaillan. They rushed upon each other, La Renaudie running his antagonist through the body, and being himself shot by the valet of the slain.

The conspirators thus defeated, the struggle continued in the château between the Guises and Catherine, supported by her chancellor. The king, like his mother, was alarmed, and thought with justice that it was the presence and policy of the Guises which gave rise to all these perils, whilst they affirmed that the conspirators sought the king's life, not theirs. The contending parties in the court, however, concluded a compromise, by which the Duke of Guise was declared lieutenant-general of the kingdom, with extraordinary powers, he at the same time consenting to the amnesty already drawn up. The chancellor refused to sign his patent as lieutenant-general till he did so. The prevalence of Olivier's moderation proved but short-lived, for the associates of La Renaudie, little counting upon the mercy of the Guises, resolved to attack the château of Amboise, by this time stripped of its garrison, one body undertaking to cross the bridge and force the great gate, whilst another was to break into a small door at the edge of the river. The treason of an officer named Lignières disclosed the plan to the court, and this last forlorn hope of the conspirators, received with an overwhelming fire, was routed, thrown into the river, or brought in captive. There was then no mercy for the chiefs. Guise took revenge, not only of these, but of the authors of the amnesty, his opponents in the council. Castelnau, Mazères, and the other chiefs, were put to the torture, in order to make them confess that their design was not merely upon the Guises, but against the king. This some were weak enough to admit in their torments. But Castelnau was firm, and reproached so bitterly the chancellor for sanctioning the execution of persons guilty of believing what he himself approved, that Olivier was wrung with shame and remorse. Catherine

CHAP. XXIII.

did her utmost to save Castelnau, but the cardinal was inexorable. When these chiefs were executed, Guise compelled the king, the queen mother, and the whole court, to attend and witness the scene from the windows, and the platform of the château. There some of the unwilling witnesses were struck with the act of Villemongis, who, gathering in his hand some blood fallen from his brother victims, flung it aloft, calling on God "to avenge the innocent." Anne of Esté, Duchess of Guise, burst into tears, being the only one present who durst show weakness. The chancellor Olivier took to his bed immediately after. The Cardinal of Lorraine coming to visit him, the dying chancellor turned away, exclaiming, "You have damned us all."*

It was not without strong presumption that the Prince of Condé was accused of being privy to these attempts. The young king reproaching him with it, the prince desired to be heard before all the court and the knights of the Order. When they were assembled, Condé stigmatised, as a "poltroon and a liar, whoever accused him of conspiring against state and crown, which he was prepared to uphold with more zeal than his enemies." The prince might have added, that he did not consider the late conspiracy directed either against state or king. The Duke of Guise, however, instead of pressing the prince hard and accepting the challenge, declared he was ready to vouch for Condé's sincerity, and be his second against any one who persisted in the charge.

* Vieilleville recounts, that the Duc de Nemours was furious, on account of the signature which he had given to Castelnau and his companions, when they surrendered, promising they should not be harmed. Had he given but his word, says Vieilleville, he might have got off by contradicting it, but his signature! See Le Laboureur, Addition aux Mémoires de Castelnau, De Thou, D'Aubigné, La Popelinière, the memoirs of Condé and those of Guise, La Planche, who goes to the end of Francis the Second's reign, and La Place, who continues to the Colloque de Poissy: also Tumulte d'Amboise in Cimber and Danjou, Archives, tom. iv.

CHAP. XXIII.

The state of the kingdom was not such as to warrant more severity. The executions of Amboise, joined with the report that the victims had merely intended to present a petition to the king, stirred up the discontent of the provinces. Guyenne and Berry, and even Normandy, wrote Andelot*, were likely to follow the example of Dauphiné. When the court quitted Amboise, the first care of the cardinal was that the king should make a solemn entrance into Tours. On this occasion a baker placed his child, with his eyes bound, on an ass, a red hooded bird standing on his head and pecking at it. The crowd took the child to represent the king, and the bird the cardinal. It turned the whole procession into ridicule. As the court advanced, the spirit of the people showed itself more and more disrespectful. The Guises themselves did not know how to deal with it. Condé asked to be set free, which request the duke was for granting, the cardinal for refusing. Catherine, alarmed, sent for the Huguenot minister, Chandieu, to hear his opinions. As he refused to obey her summons, she consulted La Planche, who pointed out to her that all France was becoming hostile to the court on account of the Guises, some on religious, others on political grounds. He recommended a council of French clergy to consider the demands of the one, and the states-general to remedy the grievances of the other.

The dispositions of foreign powers also embarrassed the Guises. Their sister, mother of queen Mary, in ruling Scotland after their advice, had provoked the reformers of that country to rebellion. On the accession of Francis and Mary to the crown, their obvious policy was to conciliate the government of England, and prevent its supporting the malcontents. Elizabeth, who, above all feelings, had those of a queen, was most

* Letters of March 26, in Lettres et Mémoires de Guise.

CHAP. XXIII.

reluctant to aid the rebellious subjects of another monarch. But the French court left her no choice. In quartering the arms of England with their own, these princes put forward a claim even to the English throne. Elizabeth, therefore, with the advice of Cecil*, despatched efficient succours into Scotland, which completely overcame the army sent by Guise. She at the same time entered into communications with the French Protestants, and was probably not a stranger to the enterprise of Amboise†, sending forth almost simultaneously with it a declaration against France (March 1560), and more especially against the Guises, as the influence at its court which provoked war. Whilst making an enemy of England, the Guises had not secured an ally in Spain. The king's sister had indeed espoused Philip the Second early in the same year, but Elizabeth flattered the house of Austria with hopes that she would marry an archduke, and Philip deprecated her being as yet made the object of open hostility. Nay, Chantonnay, Philip's ambassador in France, gave his advice to Catherine, that the Guises had better withdraw for a time, from the general animosity which their domination excited.‡

Under the pressure of these circumstances, the milder policy of Catherine prevailed. An envoy was sent to Scotland with full powers to conclude a treaty with Elizabeth and with the Scotch. And this indeed he

* Cecil's Memoir. Council to Queen. State Papers.

† Throgmorton's relations with Navarre and Condé are detailed in his correspondence. But the Vidame de Chartres was more peculiarly in English confidence. Forbes' *Elizabeth, Corres.* vol. i. Still there is no proof of Elizabeth's complicity. All that the Cardinal of Lorraine could affirm was the giving of money, and that much later. He also complained, that the English envoy, who had just returned from England, held aloof from court, and deferred paying his respects to the king previous to the affair of Amboise.—*Négociations*, folio xi. p. 284, &c. The occasion on which the English arms were quartered with the French was at Orleans and Chenonceau. The mode of quartering them is given in Strype's Memorials, anno 1558.

‡ De Thou.

lost no time in arranging in order to save the 4000 French troops who ran hourly the risk of being forced in Leith.*

Michel de l'Hôpital began in these difficult times to acquire ascendency in the councils of the queen mother. He was the son of the Constable Bourbon's physician. For a time he followed Charles the Fifth's court, and became an auditor of the Rota at Rome. Returning to France, he married the daughter of the Lieutenant Criminel Morin, and received for her dowry a place of counsellor in parliament. Sent by Henry to the council of Bologna, his tolerant spirit stopped his advancement at the French court, and Margaret, Duchess of Savoy, took him into her employ.† Soon after, Catherine appointed De l'Hôpital to succeed Olivier in the chancellorship. Almost his first appearance in the council brought him into antagonism with the Cardinal of Lorraine, who, although he had succeeded in expelling the Huguenot judges from every parliament, still thought the forms of the tribunals tedious, and their spirit too lenient. He preferred the summary mode of procedure prescribed by the Spanish Inquisition, to which De l'Hôpital rejoined, that, however such a system of terror might have succeeded in the first buddings of the Reformation, it could now but irritate the evil, and even provoke resistance. Anxious, nevertheless, to meet the wishes of the cardinal, and at the same time secure the judges of parliament from being converted into inquisitors, he drew up, and caused to be promulgated, the Edict of Romorantin (May 1560). This law transferred the power of examining and pronouncing upon heresy to the bishops, whilst it limited the jurisdiction of the civil magistrates to cases of turbulence and sedition. This

* Montluc and Randan's Letters to the Queen Mother. MSS. Baluze, 8471.

† Testament du Chancelier de l'Hôpital.

CHAP. XXIII.

might appear an aggravation of severity towards the Huguenots; but in reality it proved the contrary. The bishops in the provinces were less fanatical than those judges whom the Guises had advanced; they had not the prisons at their disposal, nor the civil power always ready to execute their behests, so that the greater part of the Huguenot prisoners were enabled to escape.*

But De l'Hôpital's counsels went farther, and coincided with the opinion of La Planche, that a national council, as well as the states-general should be convoked. Coligny, who as admiral had been visiting the seaports of Normandy, wrote in the same terms. And in July the king came to the determination of first summoning the Pope to call a general council, not like that of Trent, exclusive and fulminating, but one which Protestants might attend.† If that failed, a council of the French Church was to be convoked, composed of such "worthy churchmen, as might place the consciences of the king's subjects in repose, purge the Church of abuses, and establish a good reformation."‡

The sincerity of the monarch appears from his letters to the French envoys at the Spanish and imperial courts. But the cardinal and his brother had other views. And they at once proposed anticipating the states-general by an assembly of the chief nobles and officers of the crown at Fontainebleau. From this the cardinal hoped to receive financial succour, and the Guises the means of raising a military force to oppose the Prince of Condé, whom they knew to be meditating war. Should the prince and his brother obey the

* Vie de Nicholas Pithou:—

"Seeing that the Edict of Romorantin interrupted the punishment of heretics, the more zealous of the crown officers accused them before the Council of State—those of La Châtre were so prosecuted; but the council liberated them all."—*De Bèze*, liv. iii.

† King's letters. Négociations sous François II. p. 452.

‡ Ibid.

summons to Fontainebleau, the design of entrapping and arresting them was no doubt also entertained. Letters of convocation were accordingly issued for the assembly to take place on the 21st of August.

The Bourbon princes at once declined to attend. If the constable and Coligny appeared, it was with a number of followers almost amounting to an army. The first day of the assembly was occupied with formal harangues and official statements. But the second meeting was opened by Coligny's presenting a request in the name of 50,000 Norman Protestants, who professed themselves loyal subjects of the king, and ready to contribute to his wants, but demanding the liberty of performing their worship publicly and by day. The tolerance, if not favour, with which the queen mother heard these demands of Coligny, encouraged others of moderate and liberal opinions. Two counsellors who bore the title of bishops, but who were old diplomatists, rewarded for their labours by episcopal dignity and revenues, the Bishops of Valence and Vienne, spoke at length, and recommended that the affairs of religion should be settled in a national council of the clergy; those of finance and domestic policy discussed in the Three Estates of the kingdom, which from time immemorial had existed, and which could alone afford the means of making known the complaints and desires of the people.

This proposal excited universal approbation, and the Guises at first remained silent. Coligny afterwards came forward with more precise and personal demands. He insisted on the convocation of the states-general, a complete suspension of persecution till the national council assembled, and upon the dismissal of the king's guard. This, consisting of 100 arquebusiers, had been newly established by the Guises, and the command given to Plessis de Richelieu, grandfather of the famous

CHAP. XXIII.

cardinal. He had been a monk, but had left his convent for a dissolute life as a soldier. He was hence called in derision the monk. He signalised his promotion by endeavouring to excite his troops to the plunder of the Protestants, in some towns on the Loire, so that the royal guard and its commander, were peculiarly obnoxious to the religionists.

The Duke of Guise in reply to Coligny did not find it difficult to prove that a royal guard was requisite amidst such enterprises as that of Amboise. On other points, those of religion and of the state, the duke and cardinal both took the high ground of asserting, that all "truth must proceed from tradition, all justice and all authority from the crown. Of what use could a council be, except to confirm what was already established? All the councils in the world could not make him change his religion, or his ideas respecting the last supper, or the sanctity of the mass. And if the admiral brought 50,000 Huguenots, he, Guise, would readily find a million to defend the Church." His opinions on the subject of political power were even still more uncompromising. Subjects, said Guise, "had no right to offer advice to their sovereign, whatever might be the amount of their wisdom and experience!" The principle of absolutism was never, perhaps, more crudely or more frankly expressed.* The Cardinal of Lorraine, however, read in the countenances of the assembly the necessity of abating somewhat of these pretensions. Instead of opposing the national council, he managed to evade and adjourn it. The summoning of the Three Estates he consented to. Indeed, with his contested authority, it was impossible for him to meet the annual deficit, which he declared to amount to two millions and a half of livres, or provide funds for the defence of

* Account of Estates at Fontainebleau, from MS. of Bibliothèque St. Geneviève in tom. x. of Les Etats Généraux, by Bailly; also the Mem. of Condé, De Thou, La Planche, and La Place.

the court and of its party. On the last day of August, therefore, an edict was issued convoking the Three Estates to meet at Meaux in December, and a national council was to open soon after. Prosecutions before the bishops for heresy were suspended, whilst those before the judges were alone permitted until the meeting of the council. The distinction fully explains the aim of De l'Hôpital in the Edict of Romorantin.

These efforts of the moderates were defeated by the restless intrigues of Condé and the artful vigilance of the Guises. The success of Montbrun in Dauphiné, and De Mouvans in Provence, had induced the prince to favour a scheme for raising the Huguenot standard in the south-east of France, and making Lyons its centre. Notwithstanding the opposition of the King of Navarre, young Maligny undertook to make himself master of that important city. He brought 3000 men by detachments from Provence, but was defeated in his attempt by Saligny, lieutenant to the Maréchal de St. André, its governor. Condé had despatched an emissary, named La Sague, to the constable, for the sake of communicating with him and other foes of the Guises, and also of procuring funds. This man, wanting the requisite prudence for such a mission, was arrested, and letters found upon him. One of these, from the Vidame de Chartres, caused the immediate arrest of that noble, and his committal to the bastille. La Sague, put to the torture, confessed that it was the plan of the Bourbon princes to march from Guyenne by Poitou to the Loire, where Damville, second son of the constable, was to meet them with 600 gens-d'armes.* The court was still agitated by these revelations when word was brought of the attempt made by Maligny to seize Lyons. Such acts rendered powerless the party of conciliation, and restored uncontrolled

* La Popelinière; La Place, Interrogatoire de la Sacque. Cimber and Danjou, Archives, t. iv.

CHAP. XXIII.

authority to the Guises. If the mild language and tolerant purpose of the assembly were persevered in, this was alone for the sake of enticing and entrapping their enemies.

Great stress has been laid upon the dissimulation which the court practised in order to lure the Bourbon princes. But the latter practised no less craft. In the previous affair of Amboise, Condé certainly acted with even more falsehood than the Guises, however better might be his cause; whilst the crime and folly of creating insurrection and appealing to arms, at the very time when edicts of persecution had been suspended, and when a council of the clergy, as well as of the states-general, were summoned, proved how utterly incapable and unfit this prince was to be the leader of a party.

The chief object of the Guises was to procure the attendance of the Bourbon brothers at the states-general, the election for which the signal failure of the Huguenots at Amboise and Lyons enabled the Catholics to influence and manage according to their desires. To arraign Condé and the Vidame de Chartres before the estates, or before a court whose decision they would sanction, was the purpose. To procure their condemnation, involve the King of Navarre and the constable in their ruin, and thus destroy all the chiefs of the Protestant faction, seemed not doubtful of accomplishment. At the same time preparations were made, in case the Huguenot princes refused to attend the states, to carry the war into Guyenne, and thus compel their submission and that of the party.

The Bourbon brothers resolved to brave their enemies. The King of Navarre was conscious of having but in a very mild degree abetted the designs of Condé. The latter hoped to cover his backslidings by the same audacity which he had successfully employed

at Amboise. Crussol was sent by the king to confirm them, especially Navarre, in reliance upon his fairness and good intentions.* The princes hearkened to him, and drew nearer to the court. They were repeatedly warned of their danger, the Huguenot towns of the west offering them strong escort and support. But this was civil war, and had its dangers also. Both princes entered Orleans on the last day of October. Most coldly received by the king, surrounded by the Guises, they were conducted by the monarch to the presence of his mother, who, on beholding them, shed tears,—"crocodile tears," says the Protestant historian. The young king, the Guises being absent, to show that it was not merely under their influence that actual events took place, reproached Condé with his treacherous designs. The latter replied that these were inventions of the Guises; and the monarch, rejoining that the truth would appear upon his trial, ordered the prince into instant arrest. The King of Navarre was not subjected to this indignity, but sufficient care was taken to watch his movements, and prevent any attempt at resistance or escape.

Notwithstanding the hypocrisy with which the Protestant writers charge Catherine, it is certain that she was opposed to extremities.† The triumph of the Guises, and the prevalence of the ultra Catholics, were not what she desired. Catherine at this time besought Montmorency to fling off his suspicions of her, and come to court. This, say her enemies, was written merely

* Instruction to Crussol. MSS. Colbert, c. 28. This and the preceding volume form a complete repertory of the letters and documents of the period.

† A curious proof of the oscillation of the court at this time exists in a copy of orders drawn up by Francis the Second, to be sent to De Termes in Poitou, Villars in Languedoc, and Burye in Guyenne, telling them to hang all the preachers and armed Huguenots, or cut them in pieces. The king's signature, as well as that of secretary Robertet, to this document, are blotted over, evidently by ink of the same period. See MSS. Colbert, 27.

CHAP. XXIII.

for the sake of entrapping the constable also. It was more probably with the view to oppose the violence of the Guises, and to save Condé.* The trial of the prince was hastened like that of Dubourg; he refused to answer or acknowledge the jurisdiction of those who questioned him. But the young king was personally exasperated, and pressed for the prince's conviction. His friends were also imprisoned; and his mother-in-law, the Countess of Roye, was committed to the Castle of St. Germains.

The catastrophe which was imminent — as the execution of a severe sentence upon Condé would have instantly caused civil war — was this time arrested by the sinking of the king's health. He caught a cold, which aggravated an inflammatory swelling in his ear. He had promised the Guises to be present at the execution of the bailiff of Orleans, one of those implicated in the letters of La Sague.† But Francis declined to attend, and ever after was unable to rise from his couch. An imposthume burst in his ear, causing dangerous fever; the physician Paré declared that Francis could not live. The Guises, who dreaded reaction, sought‡, it is alleged, to obviate the danger by hastening the sentence and execution of Condé.§ Several members of the council and of the Order of St. Michel, whom they put together to form a tribunal, were for passing sentence; but Sapin refused, and De l'Hôpital, with one of his brother legists, seized the opportunity to adjourn the decision, and defeat the Guises. After seventeen days' illness, Francis the Second expired on the 5th of December, 1560. The regal power

* Her letter in Négociations sous François II., p. 678; from MSS. Bethune, 8674.

† The *gros marchands* of Orleans, according to Pasquier, had contributed funds to the conspiracy.

‡ La Court's account in Négociations sous F. II. p. 738.

§ One is reluctant to believe that Guise would have caused Condé to be executed, when he certainly treated him generously, and saved his life after the battle of Dreux.

at once passed from the husband of Mary Stuart to his next brother, Charles the Ninth, and to the queen mother, to whom alone a boy prince could look for counsel.

The premature death of the young king counteracted the plans and overthrew the power of the Guises. Their aim had been to embark Catherine with them in irredeemable enmity towards the Bourbons. This aim the Chancellor De l'Hôpital defeated by bringing about a reconciliation between her and the King of Navarre. When the council met on the day after the royal demise, and Catherine assumed, rather than claimed, supreme power, as guardian of her son, the King of Navarre appeared as her adherent and ally. The Guises could but acquiesce; and the Cardinal of Lorraine gave up the seal, a new one being ordered by the queen mother for herself. The captains of the guard and of the Swiss took the oath of obedience to her, as did the secretaries of state, the intendants of finance, and the knights of the order.* Catherine enjoined functionaries at court or in the capital to address themselves to the king of Navarre, who would report all to her; more remote commanders were to address their despatches to her directly, she consulting Navarre and the council.† The Duke of Guise continued to fill the place of grand master, and the constable resumed the authority of his office by dismissing the king's guard. The Prince of Condé was allowed to withdraw to Ham, one of his own castles in the north. The wish of Catherine was to lull every discontent, and distribute an equal share of dignity and emolument to each.

The first acts of her foreign policy displayed the same wish for conciliation. She did not participate in the rival feeling of the Guises towards Elizabeth, and

* La Court's account. Laubespine's Journal.

† Account of what took place after the death of Francis the Second. MSS. De Mesmes, 5, 8669.

CHAP. XXIII.

conveyed to that queen the desire of the French court to be at peace, a desire the sincerity of which she was prepared to prove by sending away to the Levant the galleys that were collected in the channel. Elizabeth replied to such advances by corresponding amity. She declared her annoyance at the assumption of English arms by Francis to be removed by his death. Catherine promised to observe the treaty of Cateau Cambresis, the clause respecting Calais included*; and Elizabeth gave the young French monarch, through his ambassador, De Seurre, the following most remarkable piece of advice: — "Tell your master," said Elizabeth, "that war is only fit for poor devils of princes who have their fortune to make, and not for the sovereigns of two great countries, like France and England." †

Charles the Ninth was a boy of eleven years of age, bright-eyed, vivacious, fond of movement and action, but weak of appetite and strength, shortness of breath obliging him to repose after any lengthened efforts. A brief and febrile reign might already be augured.‡ The first act of the young king was to open the assembly of the estates, on the 13th of December. The chancellor harangued them in his name, and promised a halcyon reign of peace and concord. The accession of Charles he depicted as the rising sun, which dissipated every cloud. The old custom of holding the estates, discontinued during eighty years, would now be resumed, and persevered in. To regard such assemblies as objects of fear and suspicion was to hold language applicable to tyranny, not to the reign of a legitimate prince who could but profit by the councils of his subjects. Familiarity with these never hurt a king of France. Other monarchs were served on the knee; they were not more

* This had been refused by Francis the Second.—*Forbes' State Papers.*

† Letters of the Chevalier de Seurre in the Bibliothéque of Grenoble, MSS. No. 203.

‡ Relazione da G. Michele. Relazione Venete.

beloved than the French king, who mingled with all ranks, and was approached by them. There was at present no cause of discord but religion, which was strange, as the essence of Christianity was peace. Differences with regard to it ought to be settled in council, not in the field. And the attempt to accomplish, by costly armies, by violence and bloodshed, what should be effected by fair means and by reform of abuses, would damage still more and not restore Christianity.*

The three estates severally answered by their orators. Quintin, Procureur of the Paris University, speaking for the clergy, indulged in violent animadversions upon Coligny and the Protestants. He complained that the books and preaching of the Huguenots were favoured by many of the royal judges and functionaries, who rendered ecclesiastical prosecutions null. In several places the heretics had grown bold, and even went armed. Whilst demanding the repression of such audacity of opinion and conduct, the clerical orator did not deny the necessity of reforms in the Church, to which he declared the true road and commencement would be to abolish the Concordat, and restore the right of election to the clergy.

In this both the other estates agreed, recommending, however, that the lay population should take part in the election, the lord and inhabitants of a district choosing the *curé*. The commons proposed in addition that the church revenues should be divided, as in olden time, between the clergy, the poor, and the reparation of the church. "The principal point of the maintenance of every state being the instruction of youth," they insisted on the prelates furnishing funds and masters for diocesan schools, and equally insisted on princes and nobles affording education to their pages.

* Collections of Reports and Documents entitled "Des Etats Généraux," published in 1789, vols. x. and xi.

CHAP. XXIII.

Tolerance until the meeting of a national council was their remedy for religious dissidence. And this they subsequently carried so far as to demand the public use of their temples for the Protestants.

Such were the liberal votes and opinions uttered by the representatives of the French people at the commencement of Charles the Ninth's reign, these representatives chosen at a time when the Guises were predominant, and the Huguenot chiefs in misfortune and disgrace. No doubt the converse and persuasions of the Chancellor De l'Hôpital had great weight with the assembly; but that it was open to listen to such persuasion and utter such advice, proved what great progress the French had then made in their views of at least religious government. Still, the sentiments of the northern provinces were as evidently orthodox, as those of Touraine were frankly Huguenot, the Normans wavering between the two opinions. The only marked difference between nobles and commons regarded judicial matters, the delegates of the aristocracy being desirous of maintaining their own jurisdiction without appeal, their class being amenable to none save royal *baillis*, who were to be of the short robe, that is, gentlemen of the country, of position and birth. They also demanded the right of chase and of the arquebus, with the monopoly of military and other functions. The commons did not seem to dispute this; but they insisted upon having royal and not seignorial justice. And they, moreover, strongly opposed and remonstrated against the *corvée* and other modes of exaction and repression practised by the noble on the peasant.

Whilst thus abounding in religious remonstrance and political advice, the estates were not prepared to take in hand the great subject for which they were chiefly called together, that of meeting the arrears and exorbitance of public expenditure. A debt of 42,600,000 livres frightened them. They pleaded the want o'

power to deal with such a demand, suggested that the good towns might contribute to immediate wants, and begged to be sent home to consult those who had elected them. In this they were gratified, the estates being dismissed at the end of January, on the understanding that each class was to elect one member from every province to meet in November, and transact the business, which, far from terminating, they had not even commenced.

De l'Hôpital proceeded to carry out these principles by embodying in an edict issued from Orleans the chief recommendations of the assembly. This edict operated a complete reform both in the clerical and judicial bodies. It applied to both the principles of election. It abolished the concordat, forbade the payment of annates to the Pope, or the sale by him of benefices or reversions. Archbishops were to be chosen by bishops, bishops by the clergy, joined with twelve lay notables. The venality of the offices of the parliament was also abrogated. The judges were to choose three candidates to succeed to a vacant place, and the crown was to select one. All extraordinary courts of justice were abolished, and the number of both judicial and financial offices were reduced to the number existing under Louis the Twelfth. Judges were forbidden to receive pensions from prelates, De l'Hôpital endeavouring to break the link by which the Church had sought to establish the dependence of the bar.* The provisions for education were equally remarkable, the revenues of all communities, except what was necessary for divine service, being taken, and applied to the establishment of schools.

Such was the great effort of De l'Hôpital to save the Church, by reforming it, and at the same time restore

* One third of the parliament was already clerical, according to the Mémoires de Guise.

CHAP. XXIII.

the independence and efficiency of the magistrature. It was a great mistake on the part of the chancellor not to have enacted this great ecclesiastical and judicial reform by the estates themselves, from the members of which, if kept together, and as a better informed and enlightened public, he might have found support. But De l'Hôpital unfortunately did not see the necessity of either public opinion or representative government. The king's authority, he thought, sufficed for all. And, whilst conscious of wielding it, he foolishly despised the mass of enemies which his legislation created. Although his decree embodied the chief desires of the clergy, still he accompanied it by other measures, especially of heavy taxation, most odious to them. The reduction of the number of judges and the abolition of venality of office did not please the judicial class. And both these bodies, paramount in the capital, carried the populace along with them in enmity to the Chancellor, his tolerance and his reforms. Months were spent by the court in endeavouring to bend the obstinacy of the parliament, which refused to register the edict. The King of Navarre, who undertook to half persuade, half compel them, was insulted by the First President Le Maître; and when Catherine, by a lieutenant of the guard, ordered that magistrate to remain a prisoner in his house, his colleagues went in a body to remonstrate.* The parliament also objected to the amnesty, which allowed pastors and religionists to return to the kingdom and to their homes, and they only passed it with the proviso, that those who returned should live as Catholics.†

The queen mother had passed through the formidable ordeal of the states'-general, with a certain success, not

* Interdiction de Président le Maître. MSS. Bethune, 8930.

† Suriano considers the return of the proscribed preachers the great cause of the subsequent increase and outburst of Huguenoterie.

CHAP. XXIII.

a word being breathed against her authority. But on the other hand nothing had been done to relieve her pecuniary distress. This alone threatened her power. She was obliged to curtail the salaries of the court officers, the pensions of functionaries, of judges, and no doubt of dignitaries, which had the effect of rendering all discontented. Her own financial views were to make the clergy pay the public debt, in which scheme she had secured the support of the leading men of the lay estates, and also of the Gallican and Huguenot party.

Not being able to await the meeting of delegates, she summoned the provincial estates, beginning with Paris, in March, and besought them to sanction a proposal that the clergy should pay fourteen millions of livres towards the liberation of the royal revenue and domain, and that an increased duty should be imposed on salt and wine without any exemption of classes. The estates, reluctantly assembling, declared the clergy to be well able to pay, but objected to the consumption-duty being levied on the capital.

In these demands, and in the political course she was pursuing, Catherine had every reason to count upon the support of the King of Navarre, whose party was favoured and whose principles were triumphant. But that fickle personage as well as the constable had taken umbrage at the influence which the Duc de Guise seemed personally to wield; and he was also annoyed to perceive that the queen and De l'Hôpital were more careful to make concessions to the Protestant party than to the Protestant chief.

King Antoine, therefore, made use of his influence in Paris to procure the election of members for the provincial estates unfavourable to the court. And, after rejecting the queen's proposition, they began to demand that no new council should be appointed, and the King of Navarre have the guardianship of the sovereign. They

CHAP. XXIII.

complained loudly of De l'Hôpital.* They menaced the Maréchal de St. André, and the ministers of the late reign, with an inquiry, as to how the great debt had been incurred, a menace which roused a host of enemies. Catherine saw at once the cause of their frowardness, and sought to remove it by conciliating the King of Navarre. He demanded no less than the dismissal of the Duc de Guise from court—and threatened to go away himself, with the Chatillons and the constable, if this were not granted. The queen was in perplexity, but she sent to the constable in the young king's name, begging him not to desert the court. Montmorency obeyed: the secession did not take place, and Navarre was satisfied by the lieutenant-generalship of the kingdom, and the promise of being consulted on all important affairs.† At the same time the other provincial estates throughout the kingdom were convoked, in the hope of obtaining from them grants of money to meet the exigencies of the state.

Catherine, as usual, tried to steer between extremes. She forbade the sale of meat in Lent, but she allowed the Bishop of Valence to preach before the king, which that prelate did without invoking the saints, and with recommendations that the Scriptures should be read and the Psalms sung in the French vernacular. The Guises and the constable affected to be horrified at such doctrines, and, deserting the royal *prêche*, went together to attend mass performed by a friar for the domestics in the *basse-cour* of the château.

The triumvirate, as the league between Guise, the constable and St. André was called, soon made itself felt. The population of Paris and of several towns rose in insurrection against the Huguenots. They attacked a house

* Que le Chancelier de l'Hôpital aye à se déporter de l'excessif de son état, &c.

MSS. Fontanieu, 298, contains reports of the proceedings in the Prévôté de Paris. March, 1561.

† Suriano, Relazione Venete.

in the Pré aux Clercs, and in a riot of a similar kind against the Bishop of Beauvais, brother of Coligny, several were killed on both sides (April 1561). Catherine sought to impose silence and peace. The king issued a decree ordering all persons to live *catholiquement.* This the parliament interpreted after their fashion, and forbade Protestant *prêches.* But Catherine and De l'Hôpital instantly checked their zeal by issuing letters patent, ordering quarrels and vituperations to cease, forbidding the houses of Protestants to be entered or forced, and setting free all Huguenot prisoners. The parliament refused to register these letters patent, which thus became inoperative in Paris, although they opened the prison doors in a great number of provincial towns.*

These acts of tolerance and the policy which suggested them, chiefly springing from the influence of De l'Hôpital, were interrupted by the journey of the king to Rheims in order to his coronation. This flung him and Catherine once more under the power of the Guises, and compelled the latter to modify many of her resolves. She had ordered the clergy to send in an account of their revenues, a command that filled them with no little alarm. The Cardinal of Lorraine obtained a suspension of it. Catherine, with her usual flexibility, seemed to bend to their exigencies, even to the young king's attending the procession of the *Fête Dieu*, to which she had objected in a solemn letter to the Pope. Fears being entertained of the Protestants interrupting or disturbing the ceremony, Guise himself repaired to Paris to give his personal protection to the principal festivity of his church.

The estates, or delegates from the estates, were to assemble on the first day of August, as well as a synod of ecclesiastics to take into consideration the affairs of

* De Bèze.

CHAP. XXIII.

religion. The triumvirate were not prepared to oppose these meetings, but they objected to the suspension of laws enforcing Catholicism, and allowing such complete tolerance to the Huguenots, which the latter had taken advantage of to seize almost all the churches in the South.

The three great magnates were supported by the Spanish envoy* and by the Pope, whilst the King of Navarre, to whom it was adroitly hinted, that the sure way to recover his Spanish kingdom, or an indemnity for it, was to support Catholicism and Spain, began again to hesitate†, and to recommend the confession of Augsburg as preferable to the religious tenets of Calvin.‡ The new estates of Paris too, though silent as to the queen's requests, were clamorous against tolerance and the Huguenots. The council of state began to waver; the queen and even De l'Hôpital were obliged to fling themselves upon the parliament, and profess a readiness to follow its advice. A meeting was called of the judges, of counsellors and courtiers mingled. De l'Hôpital in addressing them, did not venture to urge the necessity of tolerance, but, declaring that the devil had embroiled religious convictions, he asked their advice as to the nature of the law, which it was necessary to observe and enforce. As the court and Catherine thus threw themselves at the feet of the Catholic legists, the intolerant grew bold, insisted on banishing and burning; and, in despite of a few protesting voices, a new edict, called that of July, was issued, withdrawing the tolerance promised until the meeting of the estates, and forbidding conventicles altogether. And in order that this law might be summarily and universally executed, jurisdiction in all cases under it was given to the presidial or secondary judges of districts

* Chantonnay had never ceased to remonstrate against what he called the chancellor's *Interim*.

† Chantonnay's letters of July 9.

‡ Bruslart, and Calvin's letters of August, 1561.

and inferior towns, who were to pronounce judgment without appeal.*

The promised assemblies, however, met soon after, that of the twenty-six delegates of commons and nobles at Pontoise, July 26, 1861, the other at Poissy, early in August. Both towns are at a short distance from the royal château of St. Germains, where the estates united, and where their sittings were opened by the king in person. There seemed good reason for keeping them separate both before and after; for the members of the lay orders were decidedly Protestant and anti-ecclesiastic. They were for maintaining the edict of Orleans to its full extent. Religion, they declared was a thing of the heart, compulsion producing nothing but hypocrisy. To this grand assertion of tolerance the estates added the proposal of selling the lands of the clergy, so as to pay two-thirds of the debt, and confiscating the revenue of the prelates above a certain sum. A papal legate was announced, in the person of the Cardinal of Ferrara, who had benefices in France to the amount of 60,000 crowns a year. The assembly proposed to fix the maximum of what cardinals should receive at 12,000. To carry out such measures the Commons demanded to be convened every two years. They insisted on the right to name a regent during the king's minority, and they declared the validity of the Salic law—fearing that in the weakly state of the family of the Valois, the crown of France might perhaps pass to the House of Austria. Catherine and De l'Hôpital had found a representative assembly imbued with far more than their own sentiments of tolerance and popular government. But it was more prodigal of advice than of support. It consented to no tax, save a small increase of the *octroi* upon wines, and merely pointed to the property of the clergy

* The Presidial Courts and judges, which were a great diminution of both seignorial and municipal judicature, were appointed by Henry the Second in 1551.

CHAP. XXIII.

as a convenient fund to be confiscated for the necessities of the state. What material power was to be employed, or might be reckoned upon, in accomplishing so daring an act of spoliation against the clergy, in opposition to Pope, Spain, and the triumvirate, the estates or their orators refrained from indicating.

Had Catherine had a soldier for her councillor, a man of energy and action, instead of the legist De l'Hôpital, a way might have been found for acting on the advice of the estates or their delegates. Had even the King of Navarre been kept firm and largely bribed, he, with the aid of the Huguenots, might have achieved the task. But Catherine, unable to satisfy his greed or keep pace with his fickleness, wanted the skill to conciliate, or the courage to brave, so powerful an enemy.

She then turned to see what might be the result of the Colloquy or ecclesiastical conference, to which Peter Martyr and some of the most eminent German Protestants had been invited. Either from his own variability, or for some profound purpose, the Cardinal of Lorraine favoured this conference, at which Rome stormed, and the Spanish envoy was horrified. He had frequent conversations with Beza, and went so far, according to La Place, as to allow, that although the Roman Catholic view of transubstantiation was the right one, it need not have been so categorically insisted on. Was this hypocrisy? Did it proceed from the same desire which the cardinal afterwards evinced to conciliate the German Protestants? Did the prelate share the fears, then so generally entertained, of being despoiled by the estates and the Huguenots*, and seek to win over Catherine by affecting equal tolerance, well knowing that the result of disputation must be a wider breach than ever with the Reformers?

If such were his expectations, they were accomplished.

* As the advocate of the Cardinal's sincerity, see Guillemin, *Cardinal de Lorraine.*

For Beza himself, all moderate as he was, was carried away even in his opening discourse, so far as to declare that the body of the Saviour in the Holy Sacrament, was as far from the elements consecrated as heaven is from earth. This crude way of putting the chief difference between Protestants and Catholics shocked the assembly, and when the Cardinal De Tournon rose to denounce it, Catherine was obliged to interrupt the sitting. But had Beza been ever so ambiguous and mild, reconciliation between the creeds was impossible. On questions of abstract dogma differences might be smoothed away. But the sacrifice of the mass, for example, how could the Catholics abandon an old traditional rite with which their whole sacerdotal system was bound up? Or how could the Protestants bow down to or accept what they were taught to consider idolatry? Catherine, Beza, and Peter Martyr were closeted with the more liberal of the Catholic divines. When the results of their joint labours were laid before the court or colloquy, they were instantly scouted (October).

Catherine saw at once the hopelessness of her aim, and merely sought to turn circumstances to present advantage. The fears of the clergy were such, that a large grant was to be obtained from them at the price of breaking up the colloquy and not acting upon the recommendation of the states. This Catherine promised to do on obtaining a vote of sixteen millions of livres from the clergy, payable in twelve years. She at the same time sanctioned the clergy sending delegates to Trent, whilst Coligny in vain besought the young king to join Elizabeth in disavowing that council altogether.* Catherine, however, did her utmost to obviate the results of Protestant disappointment, retaining Beza, and promising to modify the edict of July, hoping "to keep both religions quiet till the convocation of a general

* Calvin's Letters.

CHAP. XXIII.

council." Her concessions to Rome were important. Cancelling the chief clauses of the ordonnance of Orleans, she allowed the Papal nuncio again to levy and send annates to the Pope, as well as sell the reversion of benefices. She admits having made these concessions, in order to prevent the Pope and Philip the Second from levying war against France, a threat they had seriously made.* But Catherine's efforts could not mollify the Guises, who, after formally demanding in vain the closing of the *prêches*, withdrew to Lorraine to make preparations for recovering authority by force; whilst the Huguenots, perceiving no satisfactory results follow the colloquy or the estates, became more prone to rely on their own energy and numbers, than upon a false and feeble court, for the recovery of their rights.†

The refusal of several of the provincial parliaments to register the tolerant ordonnance of Orleans, and of the magistrates to act upon them, had excited not a few disturbances early in the year (1561). Still the Huguenots took advantage of the pardon held out to them, and returned, though not without difficulties and risk, to their habitations and property. This increased their strength and number, and they proceeded in many places to seize with a strong hand what parliament refused and governors disputed. The exasperation was augmented when the edict of July recalled previous concessions. Still hopes were entertained that the estates and the colloquy might lead to a satisfactory and final settlement.

The independent and froward attitude of provinces was, however, alarming to Catherine, and led from day to day to most contradictory orders and resolutions. Since the failure of Condé's attempt at Lyons, the lieu-

* Catherine's letters from St. Germains to her envoy at the Imperial Court, Nov. 1, 1561. MSS. Bethune, 8690, fol. 27.

† For the Colloquy see St. Croix's account in the Archives Curieuses, t. 6. MSS. St. Germain, 74. De Bèze, La Place, De Thou, Mem. of Condé, &c. &c.

tenant of the Duke of Guise had invaded Dauphiné, hanging the factious at Valence and other towns. The Huguenot chiefs and Mouvans, the most able of them, fled to the Waldensian valleys of Piedmont, where they aided and encouraged the inhabitants to resist the Duke of Savoy. Hence this prince was obliged to grant the Protestants tolerance and peace in June 1561. These turned their views to recovering the towns of Dauphiné and the Rhone. The triumvirate had no sooner gained the ascendant in Paris than they interrupted the truce which had been established in Provence, by appointing Sommerive governor, with orders to put down the religionists.* In September the whole province was in a flame; the greatest atrocities being committed upon the Huguenots, even upon the young women at Aix, whilst the "faithful" met at Riez to organise resistance.†

But it was in Languedoc and Guyenne that the greatest effervescence prevailed. In October (1561) the Huguenots of Cahors received a pastor from Montauban, and proceeded to establish their church. On the 16th of the following month the Catholics, indignant, attacked them when at prayers, *au son de cloche*, and slew all. A Catholic seigneur of the neighbourhood, named Fumel, who was ardent against the Huguenots, was put to death in revenge by his own peasantry some time after, a circumstance which enabled the opponents of the Reformers to represent it as a democratic movement of peasants against their lords. Conflicts became frequent. At Carcassonne the Protestants were the victims, as well as at Grenade near Toulouse. At Montauban on the contrary, the Protestants attacked the convents, turned out the monks, destroyed the images of the saints, and burnt a famous relic called the St. Suaire. At Agen the Reformers enlisted the services of the executioner to decapitate the images of

* De Thou. † De Bèze. La Popelinière.

CHAP. XXIII.

the saints. In Xaintonge alone did accord and peace prevail, the two religions making use of the same churches for worship.*

The frowardness of religious dissent was not the only or most serious characteristic of the movement in the South. The towns there began to refuse the *taille* and other taxes, and to set aside the royal officers, levying contributions and enrolling soldiers for themselves. The Protestant synod of Upper Guyenne, which met at St. Foy, organised the two provinces of Toulouse and Bordeaux, and elected a chief or protector for each. Every parish was to have its armed force, and its captain; a colloquy or reunion of churches having a colonel to command its forces and execute its orders.† Catherine was in great dismay. The incertitude of her mind, and the difficulty of her finding agents, are both marked in her choice of Montluc, a fierce reactionist, whom she sent to Guyenne, and of Crussol, a mild and tolerant chief, despatched to Languedoc.‡

The religious disturbances soon gained the capital itself. Under the authority of the Prince of Condé, who was governor, conventicles became numerous, and the mob clamoured for their suppression. Its violence became extreme, when tidings arrived that the Bishop of Montpelier and several of his canons had been slain by the Huguenots. The clergy were foremost to excite the people, and Tanquerel, one of them, openly preached the doctrine, that it was in the power and duty of the Pope to dethrone those princes who favoured heresy.§

The chancellor had appointed two temples outside Paris for the use of the Protestants, the one at Popincourt, the other in the Faubourg St. Marcel. The Catholics complained of the publicity enjoyed by the religionists,

* De Bèze. Pasquier enumerates as embracing Protestantism, Tours, Blois, Angers, Saumur, Le Mans, Poitiers, Bourges, Meaux, Rouen, Lyons, Macon, Valence.

† La Popelinière.

‡ Journal de Bruslart, Nov. Memoirs of Montluc.

§ Journal de Bruslart.

who even announced the day and hour of their preaching and communion. Whilst this was performing on the 27th of December, St. John's Day, at the Temple of the Faubourg St. Marcel, the priests of the neighbouring church of St. Medard rang their bells violently. The Protestant congregation sent messengers to remonstrate, who were received with insults, one of them dragged into the church and killed; the Protestants learning the outrage, rushed to avenge it, and a conflict ensued, in which many were slain. The clergy of St. Medard took refuge in their steeples, and kept ringing their bells. The provost was unable to reduce them, but at last the police came and took thirty of them into custody.

If government so easily triumphed over the tumult, it was owing to the absence of the Guises and the failure of a plot, conceived by the Duke of Nemours to carry off a younger brother of the king, in order to place him at the head of an anti-court party. The menaces and ill humour of the Guises in the North, were less alarming to Catherine than the state of anarchy and civil war which was spreading all over the South. To put a stop to this by an accord between the parties, De l'Hôpital summoned to St. Germains, in January 1562, the chief judges of the provincial Parliaments, to which he associated other notables and functionaries. In the same place and time he convoked a meeting of delegates from the Huguenot churches of the kingdom (2150 in number, says La Popelinière). This allowed him to form, with the agreement of the principal men of both religions, terms of pacification, which were subsequently promulgated as the edict of January.

This document, somewhat different in the royal edict, and in the declaration agreed to by the Huguenot ministers, allowed the latter to have places of worship outside the towns, on condition of their evacuating the churches they had seized within the walls. They were to break

CHAP. XXIII.

no more images, and repair those already broken. They were to elect no magistrates, hold no assemblies without a royal officer being present, and raise neither taxes nor troops. They were not to meet armed or by night. If a village wants to live according to the gospel, says the declaration, it must demand a minister of the Church, and this minister must go and swear before the magistrate an oath to observe the edict to preach nothing against the symbol of the Nicean council, nor against the books of the Old and New Testaments. The Parliament of Paris refused to register this remarkable attempt of Catherine and her chancellor to accomplish a legal accord between the two religions.*

It was a great mortification to Catherine, and must have proved a powerful check to her tolerant tendencies, to find that her most courageous and praiseworthy efforts for the Protestants, whilst they of course provoked the uncompromising hostility of the Catholic chiefs, by no means secured her in return the support of their enemies. Not only Montmorency became her foe, but the King of Navarre also. The House of Bourbon, indeed, was the greatest enemy that religious liberty ever encountered in France. If the Prince of Condé contributed to destroy and betray it by fickleness and rashness, he at least redeemed these by his courage. The future Henry the Fourth might plead necessity. But his father, Anthony of Bourbon, King of Navarre, had no excuse for the mass of treachery and folly formed by every act of his life. A more despicable character never disgraced the history of any country. Jealous of Guise, of

* De Thou's letters to Catherine. MSS. Supplément Français, 3003, t. 12. The edict of January will be found in Fontanon. The printed copy of the *Declaration* of the Protestant ministers is in Fontanieu, p. 300. The Parliament, in one of its protests, chose to stigmatise the English, to whose alliance Catherine was accused of leaning, as "ancient enemies." On the queen's remonstrating, President de Thou defended the expression as "traditional French." De Thou's letters from the MSS. quoted above.

Catherine, and even of his brother Condé, he now, instead of resisting the triumvirate, and aiding Catherine to do so, thought it safer to ingratiate himself with them. Catherine tried to retain him by the charms of Madlle. de Rouher, one of her maids of honour. Antoine was not indifferent to such silken ties, but the Guises held out hopes to him, of either obtaining the grant of Sardinia from Philip in lieu of Navarre, or else the hand of the Queen of Scots*, and with that, possession of the English throne. There was no offer too absurd, no bait too coarse for King Antoine. Those of the triumvirate prevailed, and completely won him from Catherine. The queen mother then fell back upon the staunch chiefs of the Protestant party, Coligny and Andelot, admitting the latter to the council, and following Coligny's advice chiefly, in the assembly of St. Germains and its subsequent edict of tolerance. The triumvirate replied by the mouth of the constable, who demanded the exile of his nephew Coligny from court.

The resistance of Catherine, and her alliance with the Chatillon brothers, convinced the triumvirate that it would be necessary to employ force in order to get possession of the king and the government. As this might provoke civil war, they exerted themselves beforehand to deprive the Huguenots of their chief military allies. These were the Protestant princes of Germany who professed the Confession of Augsburg, and with whom the King of Navarre had been long in communication and understanding. In order to represent the French Calvinists as mere anarchists, and the French Catholics as inclined to liberal reforms as the Lutherans could desire, the Lorraine brothers arranged a meeting with Duke Christopher of Wurtemburg and his brother princes in the first months of 1562, at

* De Bouillé, Hist. des Ducs de Guise, Papiers d'Etat de Granvelle,

CHAP. XXIII.

Saverne. At this interview not only did the Cardinal of Lorraine profess the same mild opinions which he had assumed in his conferences with Beza, but the Duke of Guise himself condescended to appear as semi-Lutheran, and as prepared to support the Confession of Augsburg against the Council of Trent.* After such professions it was impossible, they thought, for the German princes to send their famous *reistres* to support Condé or the queen mother, should they determine on resistance.

Such policy or hypocrisy was soon belied and rendered futile by the bigot passions which boiled in the breasts of the Lorraine brothers, the more violently for having been covered over. Returning from Saverne to Paris, they visited their native place and residence of Joinville, not very far from Jeanne D'Arc's border district of Champagne. The country round was under their jurisdiction, as proprietorial lords, with the exception of Vassy, which belonged to the royal domains, and was the seat of a *prévot.* Towns under the immediate jurisdiction of the king's officers were more free, less vexed and oppressed than those in seignorial domains. And, in consequence, the little manufacturing industry of the region concentrated itself in Vassy with its artisan population. This was the class which listened most eagerly to the preaching of the reformers; and in Vassy there grew up a congregation of some fifteen hundred. This within four leagues of their hereditary seat was a sore annoyance to the Guises. The Bishop of Chalons came to Vassy, for the express purpose of putting down the Reformers, but they withstood him and inaugurated a new temple on the 11th of November, 1560.

* Similar blandishments were at the same time tried upon Queen Elizabeth.—*Jewell's letter to Bullinger*, published in Burnet. The Duke of Wurtemberg has left an account of the interview. It has been published by the Société de l'Hist. du Protestantisme Française.

CHAP. XXIII.

The duke determined to accomplish himself what his agents had failed to do, and after the meeting of Saverne he and the cardinal came to Esclairon. From this place they proceeded to Vassy, and managed to arrive there with 200 armed followers on Sunday the 1st of March, at the hour of Protestant worship. Stopping first at the church and communing with the priests, they then advanced towards the building where the Protestants were assembled. The Duke himself afterwards alleged that his intention was to remonstrate with them for being Huguenots, to which he could have no right, they being assembled in no walled town, and according to the licence of the late edict. By the Huguenot account, one of the officers, named La Brosse, entered the temple with his soldiers; they were asked to take seats, to which they replied with the words, "*Mort Dieu, let us kill all of them.*" On this the Huguenots strove to shut the doors and put out the soldiers. But these, by the order of the duke who joined them, fired their pistols and arquebuses, and soon cleared an entrance. A general attack was then made upon the unarmed congregation; men and women were cut down, and children not spared, whilst sufficient arquebusiers remained without to shoot down those who tried to escape by roof, by window, or by a scaffolding that had been erected near the wall. At the close, some of the soldiers formed two lines without the church, whilst others drove the rest of the congregation out. And in thus running the gauntlet, most of them were slain, none escaping without a wound. In the midst of the massacre, the Duchess of Guise, who was pregnant, and who from some distance heard the cries, sent to beg her husband to spare any pregnant women. Such mercy came too late. There were from ninety to a hundred slain, and upwards of 250 wounded and maltreated. The Bible was brought to the duke, who showed it, with indig-

CHAP. XXIII.

nation, to his brother. The cardinal observed that it was the Holy Scriptures, in which there could be no harm, at which the duke raved, and declared it was impossible,—a book printed yesterday, when the Holy Scriptures were 1500 years old. He was, in fact, demented with bigotry and rage—storming, tearing his beard, and shocking even the cardinal by his intemperance. But though excited, he was not horrified by the blood that he had spilled. He dragged the wounded minister off with him, and left orders for punishing and persecuting the survivors with unrelenting severity.*

The massacre of Vassy was the signal for civil war. Although tumult and bloodshed had not been wanting, it was the first time that wholesale murder had been perpetrated by the order of so high a personage. Guise himself sought to palliate it, especially to the Germans, but the Catholic divines extolled it as an act of signal piety, and as a holy example. Guise, notwithstanding the king's order to him from Monceau, not to approach Paris, continued his march thither at the head of 3000 horse, 200 of them gentlemen.† Condé, having vainly appealed to the queen mother, entered the capital two days after with a force much inferior, composed of few gentlemen, and having but two knights of the order, Genlis and Jarnac, with him.‡ He was thus alone against the triumvirate, to which his brother, the King of Navarre, completely rallied, taking up Guise's quarrel as his own and telling the Protestant ministers that they had no right to complain

* Mémoires-Journaux de Guise, Mémoires de Condé, De Bèze, De Thou, and MSS. Dupuy, 428. Vie de N. Pithou. Discours de la Persécution de Vassy, printed. MS. Fontanieu, 306.

† Journal de Bruslart.

‡ Spifanne and Beza's letters to the churches. MSS. Bethune, 8685. Christopher de Thou's letters to Catherine, March, 1562, in MSS. Supplement Français, 3003, fol. 2. Condé's letter to Parliament of Rouen, and his Declaration (printed), are in Fontanieu, MSS. 302-3.

of persecution. "There is no doubt," replied Beza, "that the calling of the Church is to suffer martyrdom and oppression. But recollect it is an anvil that has worn out many hammers."*

Condé offered those wealthy citizens of Paris who had embraced the Huguenot creed, to defend them if they would furnish him with 10,000 crowns to raise soldiers.† From terror or lukewarmness, they raised but 1600 amongst them, and on Coligny's not obeying Condé's call, that he should come to Paris to his succour, the prince found it prudent to abandon the capital to the triumvirate.‡ They instantly celebrated their triumph by destroying the Protestant temples and burning the benches.§

The sanguinary defiance of Vassy and the march of Guise to the capital evidently took the Huguenots by surprise. They had reckoned upon the queen mother being able to maintain the edict of January. Hence their want of readiness to support Condé's scheme of defence. The prince left, not with the intention of proceeding to the north, but merely of conducting his wife to be confined at the Château of La Ferté, which lies eastward of the capital. Some of the Huguenot chiefs were at Chatillon, the residence of Coligny, who himself showed the utmost reluctance to arm and commence the civil war. His wife, it was, who pressed him with most urgency to that resolution, Coligny pointing out to her, in reply, "the vanity of popular risings, the inevitable amount of suffering and horror, with the uncertain prospect of the result." Still she continued to urge him, adding that she regarded her bed as a winding sheet, whilst so many of her co-reli-

* Journal de l'Estoile.

† La Popelinière.

‡ La Noue says that the novices of the convents were sufficiently numerous to drive out Condé, who had but 300 gentlemen, as many soldiers, and 200 students.

§ From which the Constable derived the name of Captain *Brûle-bancs*.

CHAP. XXIII.

gionists lay murdered and unburied. Coligny said he would take three weeks to consider. The three weeks for consideration she declared were long past. Unable to withstand her reproaches and his own convictions of their justice, Coligny mounted on horseback and proceeded in the last days of March to join Condé at Meaux, accompanied by about 1000 horse.*

It was too late to dispute or recover possession of the capital. An equally important achievement would have been to get possession of the king and the queen mother, who were at Fontainebleau, but Condé shrank from using any thing like compulsion. The triumvirate were not so delicate. After sending the parliament to petition the return of the court to Paris, they, along with the King of Navarre, repaired to Fontainebleau, and forcibly removed the king and his mother, first to the Castle of Melun and then to the Louvre, both expressing by tears and lamentations how deeply they felt the humiliation and violence exercised towards them. (1562.)

Having thus lost the king and the capital, the Huguenot chiefs fell back upon Orleans, not marching by Fontainebleau to intercept the court, but going round by St. Cloud and the other side of Paris. They were very nearly anticipated at Orleans also. But the vigilance of Andelot, and the celerity with which Coligny's cavaliers galloped to it (April 2), saved that town, which was soon erected into a bulwark for the creed. An arsenal was collected and a mint established there. An association was entered into by the Protestant chiefs † to use their utmost efforts for the deliverance of the king and the maintenance of those tolerant edicts which he had freely promulgated. Condé issued a second declaration, and sent to demand succours of

* D'Aubigné, La Noue, &c.

† Their names are given by Castelnau. Prince de Porcien, De Rohan, De la Rochefoucault, Genlis, Montgomery, Grammont, Soubise, Mornay, &c.

Queen Elizabeth and the German Protestants, whilst summoning to his aid all the men and money that the Huguenots of the South could muster or could spare.*

The Huguenots had in many places not waited for the summons of Condé to make reprisals for the massacre of Vassy. On the 3rd, that is, on the first news of it, there were riots at Blois; the people began to destroy the images in the churches.† The towns on the Loire followed the example, and Orleans was in full insurrection when Condé entered it. Poitou and the maritime districts west of it took up arms. What most alarmed the triumvirate was the unanimous declaration of Normandy in favour of the Huguenots; Rouen, Havre, Caen, Dieppe, Falaise pronounced, although without violence, for the new doctrine.

These events allowed Catherine to reassume authority and attempt to open negotiations with Condé. But whatever might be the views of either, they were disturbed by tidings of the massacre of Vassy having been repeated at Sens, of which town the Cardinal of Guise was archbishop. The gates having been closed, the Huguenots were attacked, slaughtered, and their bodies flung into the river. This was the signal for all moderation to cease. The Protestants of Valence having taken the Catholic governor, La Mothe Gondrin, hanged him, which was followed by the loss of Lyons and all the towns on the Rhone and the Saone to the Catholics. Bourges, Montauban, Castres, Montpelier, Nismes, Castelnaudary, Pezenas, Beziers, Agen, Aigues Mortes, the Vivarais, Cevennes, Orange, and the Comté Venaisin, with all the mountain country from Gap to Grenoble, hoisted the Huguenot standard.‡

* See Letters of Spifanne and Beza. MSS. Bethune, 8685.

† Letter of the Bailly. MSS. Bethune, 8695.

‡ Castelnau. Relations in the Mem. of Condé, De Thou, and Archives Curieuses, tom. ix. De Bèze.

CHAP. XXIII.

In general the civic class and the small gentry, especially where there happened to be a focus of instruction near, a celebrated school or university, were Huguenots. The legist, sacerdotal, and functionary class leaned on the contrary to the old order of things. And the great seats of prelacies and jurisdiction contained leaders even of the better class attached to the old religion. In such countries, too, where there were numbers of the very lower classes dependent upon these establishments and generally in penury and ignorance, there was always a population ready to be the instrument of persecution and sanguinary excess. The artisan class, which universally embraced Protestantism, was not so sanguinary, at least at first. But they were as fierce and uncontrollable in their determination to ravage churches, destroy images, deface ornaments, and desecrate those monuments which were the pride, not merely of the bigot, but of the pacific and tolerant Catholic.

This iconoclastic fury displayed itself chiefly in the towns on the Loire and of Normandy, the churches of which were devastated with unrelenting barbarity. Blois, Poitiers, Tours, Angers, Bourges, Rouen, and Caen; even Orleans itself was perfectly ravaged, and their churches reduced to the bare walls, by the Huguenots who treated every ornament as idolatrous. When the church of St. Croix at Orleans was attacked, the chiefs rushed forth to resist the marauders and save the monuments of religion and art. It was all in vain; the destroyers would listen to no voice. Condé seized an arquebus to shoot a fellow who was striking down a statue. "Wait," said the man, "till I have cast down this idol; I shall then be ready to die if you please." From Orleans the devastators went to Clery, where they broke in pieces the bronze statue of Louis the Eleventh, and threw the royal remains into the Loire. The tomb of Count John of Angoulême, the king's ancestor, was likewise destroyed, as well as those

at Vendome, in hatred to the King of Navarre.* The tomb of William the Conqueror at Caen was demolished at the same time. The sepulchres of the saints obtained even less respect than those of kings and heroes. There was little destruction left for infidel 1792 that fanatic 1562 had not already accomplished.†

In the first outburst of 1562 the Protestants had everywhere the advantage, with the exception of the Isle of France, Burgundy, and Picardy. The Huguenot gentlemen of the latter province accompanied the Prince of Condé to Orleans, and left their co-religionists of Amiens and Abbeville to be crushed and massacred by the population. If Rouen, Bordeaux, and Lyons, on the contrary, fell into the hands of the Protestants, this was due more to the activity of the Reformers than to their numbers. In the South, indeed, where they predominated, their organisation was complete. But in the North they had to make any such arrangement in the face of a population at first indifferent and afterwards hostile. The general disgust of Rome and of the priesthood was far from extending, especially in the North, to the rejection of essential dogmas. Their protest against Rome was Gallican, not Zwinglian, and more the disapprobation of citizens and men of the world than of zealous religionists, who considered the Pope as Antichrist, or the mass as idolatry. We are apt to regard with stern condemnation the political indifference of Catherine de Medicis, the tergiversation of Antoine de Bourbon, and the weakness or treachery of the Cardinal of Lorraine. Yet indifference at least was the dominant characteristic of the French mind, compris-

* The devastation of the tombs of the nobles greatly exasperated the gentry. Ronsard the poet put himself at the head of a band of the Vendomois to avenge these outrages. To be sure he was also the lay holder of an ecclesiastical benefice, an abuse which the Reformers loudly denounced. So that he had a selfish as well as a sentimental cause of enmity.

† *Saccagement des Eglises Catholiques en* 1562, par Claude de Sainctes. Cimber and Danjou, t. v.

CHAP. XXIII.

ing its noblest spirits as well as its deceitful and trimming politicians.* To establish a fair sample of French judgment, and even uprightness at that epoch, one has but to look into the author who sums up its wisdom, Montaigne, who asks how a man can be so audacious as to openly question religious laws when he knows that he must not raise objections to civil ones. Was the creed of De l'Hôpital himself very different from that of Montaigne? And do not both, joined with Pasquier, fully represent that characteristic nonchalance which marks the French mind of the 19th, the 18th, and 17th, as well as of the 16th century?

A great cause of French indifference was the extreme and abrupt form in which Protestantism was presented. To the Germans, the reformed doctrines had been offered gradually. Luther questioned indulgences first, then the Papal supremacy, and only later ventured to touch upon the sacraments. Upon France, all this, and more than this, was flung crudely, the proposed change, not merely in dogma, but in ritual and church government, being of the broadest kind. Not only were ancient rites proscribed, but the whole of the higher clergy, all the pomps and ceremonies of worship or of station. And instead of that ecclesiastical hierarchy, which was analogous to the existing organisation of sovereignty and civil government, the Calvinists purposed substituting the complete supremacy of the middle orders, and not even the most wealthy and enlightened of those orders. Their clergy, often improvised from the lower and even uneducated ranks, dominated not only in the synod or in ecclesiastical assemblies, but in councils exercising financial,

* Buckle (Hist. of Civilisation, chap. viii.) seems to think the French in the 16th century far less indifferent to theology than the English. I question the truth of the remark. The leading men of France, much as Dering charges Cecil with doing (Forbes' *Elizabeth*), looked upon religion *eminus*.

political, and even military power. When this came into full play, and was clearly seen, especially in provinces where the gentry had not time and opportunity to master the movement and acquire influence over it, speedy revulsion took place. Protestantism in 1562 overran Normandy like a tide, so great was the reigning disgust then for Rome. But no sooner was Protestantism seen there for what it really was, than it was rejected, and the tide rolled back with even greater violence and celerity than had marked its advance.

Catholicism always possessed superior numbers. It now hastened to employ organisation, activity, intelligence, education, to combat the Protestants with their own arms.* These efforts satisfied many of the wavering and indifferent, whom the excesses of the Protestants, and their devastations caused by the predominance of the most violent amongst them, had disgusted; and a more equal struggle commenced between the churches.

In war the Protestants possessed a great many advantages which secured their triumph in other countries. Their strength lay in the civic and the wealthy as well as the enlightened populations. From these not only might ample funds be procured, but soldiers, animated with the spirit of their religion and their class, and determined to shake off the double yoke of civil and religious tyranny. Unfortunately, the French Protestants did not take up the struggle in that earnest and universal spirit, nor did they select chiefs calculated to call forth the true energies and resources of their party. The Huguenots did not, like the English Protestants, employ merely at first the Essexes and the Fairfaxes, to supersede them later by chiefs born and bred of the industrious classes which they led. From first to last the French Protestants trusted the entire

* The press was now freely used by both parties. Every document was printed and distributed, and answered.

CHAP. XXIII.

conduct of their cause to a prince, if he could be found, or to a noble, like Coligny, who was the guardian of one. And these, instead of adapting the mode of warfare and the organisation of armies to the class and the cause which furnished and inspired them, continued the old routine of trusting to the mounted gentry for a cavalry force, and to foreign levies for infantry, thus setting aside altogether the true force of the Protestant party.

Nothing, indeed, more fully illustrated the narrow and defective view which the French chiefs took of the real strength of their country and of the parties in it, than that neither durst take the field, or venture war, until they received troops from Spain on the one hand, or from Germany on the other. The French peasant, whose arm had driven the English from France, had been, after that glorious event, consigned once more to a like desuetude of arms and of rights. His degradation had brutalised him, and it was impossible to trust to him for courage in the field, or for common forbearance or humanity in the hour of victory. The stuff of the man was, however, still the same, and Coligny was a chief to appreciate and turn it to use. But even he was too strict a disciplinarian to tolerate the licence inevitable on first employing such soldiers, nor would he hear of any warfare save that of a regular army. He thus disgusted instead of attaching the most valuable partisans of his cause. Besides, the Prince of Condé's influence predominated, and thus a war, essentially one of the middle class against the court, its high priests, and its high functionaries, was undertaken and carried on, not by its own civic force, but by that of a prince, the gentry attached to him, and their immediate retainers.

This mistrust of the native soldier was, indeed, disapproved of by Coligny, who condemned Condé's inaction within the walls of Orleans, as well as the

interminable and idle negotiations which took place between the prince and Catherine. They had met frequently during the month of June (1562). Condé had given Beaugency to his brother Navarre, and had trusted himself in the hands of his enemies, desirous of making peace. The Huguenot chiefs had consented to withdraw from court, and Condé had even promised to quit the kingdom. But Catherine was too far gone in her alliance with the Guises and Philip, too much in the power of the fanatics they had fostered, to be able to consent to the concession of the edict of January; and Condé's followers would not allow him to accept less.* At one of these interviews between the prince and Catherine a large portion of the chiefs and armies were present, and at no great distance from each other. Almost all were relatives and friends, and great were the hopes of an accord. When it failed, says D'Aubigné, crimson and white casaques separated in tears.†

The Guises themselves only sought to gain time until they should be reinforced by German *reistres* and Spanish infantry. Chatillon's advice to Condé had been to take advantage of the Huguenot force, which he had mustered at Orleans, to attack the Catholics and fight a battle ere they became more numerous. But Condé hesitated, and allowed himself to be amused by negotiations whilst the Catholics in Burgundy and the South profited by the absence, at Orleans, of the Huguenot forces to get possession of the towns. Condé, indeed, carried Beaugency by storm after the failure of

* The Prince of Orange, in a letter to the Elector of Saxony, says, the negotiations broke off for two causes. One was that Condé insisted on the maintenance and execution of the Edict of January, the other, that the prince demanded to be chief of the government in matters of war, leaving the Cardinal of Bourbon authority in all other departments. The court would not make these concessions, reckoning upon Condé's want of money and resources to resume the war. Van Prinsterer, Archives de la Maison d'Orange, t. i.

† White was the colour worn by the Huguenots, crimson, the Spanish colour, adopted by the Catholics.

CHAP. XXIII.

his negotiations, but soon after the Rheingraff, with his *reistres* and a body of Spanish troops, came to give incontestable superiority to the king's army. Condé then withdrew to Orleans and dispersed his followers, with their troops, to their respective provinces, too late to redeem the time and the advantages that had been lost, whilst the prince, powerless in Orleans, was condemned to see all the towns upon the Loire carried or occupied by the Catholics, their Huguenot inhabitants being, for the most part, massacred. At Tours, the Duke of Montpensier employed the lowest of the population to torture, drown, and slay the respectable Protestant inhabitants. One of the most revered presiding judges of the town, who had not joined, but had been merely just to the Protestants, was fastened to a pole in the river, and disembowelled ere dead.

The Duc de Nevers had set the example of these atrocities in Champagne, where, at Bar, Troyes*, and Chatillon, the utmost cruelties were practised, not only upon men, but upon women and children. Tavannes, who commanded in Burgundy for the Duc d'Aumale, had been compelled by Catherine to respect the lives of the Protestants, but no sooner was her authority overruled than he ejected the religionists from Dijon and other towns, and destroyed great numbers. He attacked Chalons in May, and carried Macon the following month.†

In Dauphiné, the Huguenots under Mouvans and the

* The Life of Pithou graphically describes these bands at Troyes, where Legas the butcher, Couton the rôtisseur, and Mergey, chief assassin, were the new generation of the same ruffians who ruled and decimated Paris in the days of the Armagnacs, and whose worthy descendants reappeared under the Ligne, to commit the same atrocities, at the bidding of the clergy, which others of this caste performed upon the clergy two hundred years later.

† On this occasion the celebrated monastery of Cluny was ravaged, and its fine library of books and manuscripts burnt.

Baron des Adretz, made head for a time against the Catholics, until these were reinforced by some thousands of Italian troops, under Serbelloni, the Pope's nephew, Governor of Avignon.* These joining in the war, communicated to it even more atrocity than had yet been perpetrated. Nor would the decorum of language permit the repetition of what is recorded of them. The Baron des Adretz no sooner heard of their outrages than he hastened to avenge them; attacking and forcing the Papal soldiery wherever they held garrisons. They were almost all put to the sword, or compelled to leap from the battlements which they had failed to defend. Condé sent Soubise to moderate the cruelty of Adretz, which had the effect of ultimately driving this able but cruel partisan to abandon the cause and join the Catholics.†

In Provence the struggle was carried on by the Comte de Tende, who upheld the edict of tolerance, and his son Sommerive, who was Guise's agent. The Catholics prevailed, and succeeded in shutting up their enemies in Sisteron. Des Adretz might have aided them, it was thought, in the midst of his triumph, but the coming of Soubise cooled his ardour. And thus the garrison of Sisteron, being unable to hold out longer, abandoned it by night, and made a hurried retreat, led by Mouvans, first into the Waldensian valleys, and from thence to Grenoble and Lyons. All the Huguenots who remained behind were mercilessly murdered by the victors. The large pine tree under which they performed service at Aix, was hung round with their bodies.

Montluc, on his first arrival in Guyenne, succeeded in restoring order and punishing those guilty of ex-

* "The Pope," writes Throgmorton, July 23rd, 1562, "has given an 100,000 crowns, and does pay 6000 soldiers monthly." Paris at the same time gave 400,000 crowns.

† See Des Adretz's reasons for his cruelty in D'Aubigné.

CHAP. XXIII.

cesses. But when after Vassy the king was brought by compulsion to Paris, and the Prince of Condé driven to raise an independent standard at Orleans, dissensions broke out. A funeral was the signal of strife at Toulouse, where the religions were nearly balanced, the Capitouls, or elective magistrates, being Protestants, with their wealthy fellow-citizens; whilst the remainder of the judges, the clergy, and the populace were fanatic supporters of the old rite. Each party seized a portion of the town, and entrenched themselves in it, the Huguenots in the Hotel de Ville, a regiment of students commanded by the historian La Popelinière, being its not least energetic defenders. The equality of the combatants in the town was soon destroyed by Montluc pouring in reinforcements to the Catholics, whilst their cavalry prevented the Protestants of Montauban and other towns from aiding their Toulousan brethren. The latter, accordingly, were obliged to capitulate and promise to withdraw on condition of not being molested. They were to leave their arms behind, and thus as they withdrew they were at the mercy of their foes, who violated every condition and massacred thousands of them. The executioner awaited those who remained in Toulouse, De l'Hôpital vainly sending the royal pardon and making unsuccessful efforts to save them. No space could suffice to narrate the atrocities of Montluc, which, indeed, he himself has recorded in his memoirs with ruthless simplicity. His cruelties found congenial executioners in the Spanish soldiers, who seemed to have had a peculiar vocation for murdering women. Children received no more mercy than grown people. But the chief objects of Catholic hatred were manufacturing towns, the artisan class being universally Huguenot. Limoux was, unfortunately, one of these; its Protestant population most gallantly defended itself, and more than once repulsed attacks. But the Maréchal de Foix, with a body of Spanish troops at last

forced his way into it, and spared not a life. The atrocities of the soldiers of Philip the Second cannot be described.

The chief army of the Catholics, which the king and Catherine were forced to accompany, after capturing the towns of the Loire, pursued the Huguenots, who had fled from them, to Poitiers. Here the latter were prevented from making any defence by the conduct of the commander entrusted with the guard of the castle, who not only betrayed it, but turned its artillery against the town. It was consequently compelled to surrender to the Maréchal St. André. Bourges was next invested. This town, the capital of Berri, contained a university, famed for its teaching of the civil law. Calvin had frequented it on that account, and had communicated his belief to the educated and commercial classes. These, as in Toulouse, were Huguenots, whilst the great proportion of the gentry and all the populace were Catholic. It was with difficulty that a large town thus divided could stand a siege, and Condé had only rendered Orleans itself staunch by expelling the Catholics. The citizens of Bourges prayed Montgomery to defend them. But the Prince of Condé sent thither Ivoy, brother of Genlis, with an undisciplined army of Huguenots, who, being ill supplied, exercised ravages upon town and country. As soon as Bourges was invested, Coligny learned that the Marquis d'Elbœuf was conducting the artillery and ammunition necessary for the siege. He hastily marched from Orleans, surprised the marquis coming out of Châteaudun, and routing the division which guarded them, took the cannon.* Had Ivoy been informed of this exploit, he might have held out in Bourges, but finding himself at variance with the citizens, and exercising small command over his troops, he surrendered on the 3rd of September. Catherine, who was present, saved the town from pillage.

* On this occasion Throgmorton, Elizabeth's ambassador, was captured and carried into Orleans.

CHAP. XXIII.

After the reduction of Bourges, the natural progress of the royal army would have been to lay siege to Orleans, to which encouragement was given by the tidings that Montluc had taken Agen and again threatened Montauban. But it was now certain that Queen Elizabeth, alarmed by the energetic aid which Spain and Rome both gave to the French Catholics, and which must eventually turn against herself, had come to the resolution to send an army to the support of the Huguenots. She began by offering her arbitration to the contending parties, which the French court declined.* She then concluded a treaty with Condé†, stipulating to do for the Huguenots precisely what the Pope had done for the Catholics, send 6000 soldiers to their aid, and pay them 100,000 angels. Havre de Grace, or Newhaven, as it was then called, was to be given to her, and it was to be restored at the end of the war in exchange for Calais.

In order to meet and frustrate this invasion, the royal army quitted the Loire, and hastened, in the last days of September, to lay seige to Rouen, which 3000 English were destined to occupy. Montgomery, who commanded in it, had however not at first more than 2000 men, of whom 600 were English, whilst the besieging army amounted to nearly 30,000 soldiers.‡ By bringing detachments continually to the attack, the Duke of Guise wearied out the besieged, and in this manner carried the Fort St. Catherine by storm on the 6th of October. A week later, having effected a breach in the walls of the town by the fire of forty pieces of artillery, a series of assaults was made upon it during two successive days, without other success than destroying 600 of the besieged. By the 25th an entire

* In August, 1562. Throgmorton in Forbes.

† Sep. 20: Memoirs of Condé, vol. iii., and Forbes' Elizabeth, vol. ii., which also contains the queen's declaration.

‡ D'Aubigné and the other sources. Killigrew's letter in Forbes.

gate was blown up and destroyed, leaving a wide breach. The assault, in Montgomery's words*, "was at first 800, who were repulsed: 800 more, coming to aid them, were driven back by the Englishmen: 400 more came to relieve these, and so forced an entrance. The market was furnished with 2000 men to relieve the English, but on sight of the entry ran away."† Catherine tried much to save Rouen by capitulation, as she had done Bourges. But the English troops would not surrender. Killigrew, as well as Montgomery, with difficulty escaped by the river. The victors made a large harvest by booty. The day before the final assault the King of Navarre was wounded in the left shoulder with an arquebus shot. Brought to his quarters, he lingered, refusing to receive the last consolations of religion from either Catholic or Calvinist, and died, it seems, professing the faith of the Confession of Augsburg. The death of the worthless prince was avenged by the execution of Marlorat, the chief French Protestant divine that had attended the Colloquy of Poissy, of the president Esmandreville, and six Huguenot captains. The Prince of Condé in reprisals hanged Sapin, Judge of Parliament, and an abbé, who were proceeding as envoys to Spain.

After the capture of Rouen, the Catholic chiefs determined to lay siege to Orleans. D'Andelot, after infinite pain and effort, succeeded in mustering at Bacarach, on the 10th of October, an army of 4000 lansquenets (twelve enseignes) and nine cornets of *reistres* (33,000 horse), with which he entered Orleans, on the 6th of November. About the same time Duras, who had suffered a serious defeat at Ver, and Rochefoucault

* Vaughan to Cecil. Forbes' Elizabeth, vol. ii. p. 143.

Secretary Robertet writes to the Duke of Nemours, "Les 400 Anglais dans Rouen sont si opiniâtres qu'ils ayment mieux mourir que parler de composition, Montgomery est dedans, et brave infiniment." MSS. Bethune, 8709, f. 128.

† Letters from Rouen, giving account of capture. MSS. Bethune, 8614 and 8724.

CHAP. XXIII.

arrived with all the troops they could save from Montluc in Guyenne, not exceeding 300 horse and 1500 foot. Finding himself at the head of a respectable army*, Condé, on the 8th of November, quitted Orleans, and proceeded in the direction of Paris, which he reached on the 28th, encamping his soldiers in the fields and villages north of that city.

Catherine of Medicis, as usual, took advantage of the Prince of Condé's approach to open negotiations and arrange interviews. They led to nothing; and the Huguenots, unable to force an entrance into the capital, took the route to Normandy, in order to unite with the English, who, under Warwick, occupied Havre. The Catholic commander manœuvred to prevent this junction, and on the 19th of December, 1562, both armies found themselves in each other's presence, in the vicinity of Dreux. The Prince of Condé was far superior in horse, chiefly German *reistres*, but the 16,000 Spanish infantry doubled that of the Protestants. Condé, perceiving these formidable battalions strongly posted on the heights and amidst the vines, marched as if to pass them, both armies cannonading.†

Montmorency was at the head of his regiment of gens-d'armes in the centre of the Catholic forces, with the Swiss phalanx on his left, Guise, with the Spaniards, on his right. Perceiving that some of the Huguenot squadrons quailed under his fire, he thought the opportunity good for attacking them, and gave the order. Condé and Coligny did not wait for their enemies. The former reconnoitring the Spaniards, and not liking their aspect, turned and charged into the body of Swiss, whilst Coligny did the same by the German horse and Gascons, putting both to the rout, and pursuing them

* 8000 foot and 5000 horse says La Popilinière: 6000 foot and 2000 horse says Throgmorton, who was in Orleans.

† The cannonading, according to De la Noue, continued two hours; the battle began at one o'clock and lasted till night.

to the river. Montmorency came to the succour of the Swiss, but was overthrown in the attempt and taken prisoner, his son Monberon perishing before his eyes.* But the Swiss, though broken, refused to fly†, forming groups and offering here and there resistance to the enemy's horse. And when Coligny himself returned from the pursuit of those he had routed, he found Condé struggling with the Swiss, and at the same time threatened by the advance of the Spanish infantry, under the Duke of Guise, who had hitherto kept aloof from the action. Condé's German infantry, the Almaignes, as Throgmorton calls them, "would not strike stroke, but were defeated running away, Guise receiving 2000 of them to mercy."‡

Brief but graphic accounts of the war have been left by two Spanish soldiers.§ They represent their array as upwards of 2000 men, consisting of thirty-six pikemen and twenty-two arquebusiers on either side of them, forming their first rank, whilst on one side and in advance was a body of 400 *en manche*. Coligny, who had seen the danger and warned the prince that Guise's "dark cloud of foot would break upon them," made every effort to recall his troops, who were still pursuing the fugitives. Ere this could be effected, and when the *reistres* were yet in confusion, Guise advanced

* Throgmorton, who was present at the battle and taken prisoner after it, gives the following account:—

"The vanguard of the Prince of Condé's side being conducted by the admiral and his brother, accompanied by the Prince of Hesse, and five cornettes of reistres, did defeat the *bataille* led by the constable, who was taken prisoner, hurt in the lip. And the said vant guard, following the chase of their enemies so broken, the Duke of Guise's vant guard stood firm in a place of advantage; Condé with disadvantage charged them, was defeated and taken by Damville."

† La Noue, De Thou, and De la Popelinière, &c. There is an account of the battle by two Spaniards in the memoirs of Condé; and Robertet recounts it in a letter to the Duke of Nemours. MSS. Bethune, 8688.

‡ Coligny gave much the same account to Queen Elizabeth.

§ Archives Curieuses, Cimber and Danjou, tom. v. There are short accounts of the action, both by Coligny and by Guise.

CHAP. XXIII.

upon them. The Spaniards gave two volleys, and then prepared to charge with their pikes, when the Huguenots wavered and shrank from the encounter. The Prince of Condé exerted himself to save the victory that had been his, and Coligny brought all the cavalry that would follow him to a charge, in which the Maréchal St. André was taken and slain. But it was impossible to rally the *reistres*, from a want of knowledge of their language. And Condé, his horse being killed under him, was taken prisoner, whilst Coligny withdrew in good order indeed, and unpursued, from the field, where from 7,000 to 8,000 lay dead. He implored the *reistres* to renew the combat on the following day. But these German auxiliaries of the Protestant army, who, as Chatillon wrote to Elizabeth, had received no pay for thirteen months, flatly refused; and this, with the captivity of his enemy Condé, and of his rival Montmorency, rendered Dreux doubly a victory to Guise.

The duke was now entrusted with full power, of which he did not show himself unworthy. Though many of his followers urged the necessity of slaying Condé, the victor treated his captive with courtesy and kindness, making him share his tent for more security. He led his army immediately against Orleans, and employed the greatest activity in raising troops and funds. Coligny, declared general by the Protestants, at first withdrew to Orleans, where, although he knew he might stand a siege for a certain time, he could not well shut up the army, consisting in a great measure of horse. There was no hope from Guyenne or Languedoc where Montluc was triumphant; and Des Adretz had gone over to the enemy. Coligny, therefore, early in February, 1563, took the field with his cavalry to the number of 3000, and proceeded into Normandy for the purpose of receiving succours from the English*, leaving his bro-

* Chatillon's letter to Elizabeth, Forbes, xi. 319.

ther D'Andelot with a very insufficient force of infantry to defend Orleans. The duke passed to the south side of the river, in order to attack the fortifications of the bridges, as Jeanne d'Arc had done. And his first efforts were successful; the suburb of Porterau being reduced on the 9th of February in despite of the lansquenets.* Even the bridge would have been carried but for the gallantry of D'Andelot. The next object of Guise was to force his way into the islands of the Loire. Having spent the day of the 18th in directing the preparations for this enterprise, the duke, taking off his armour, was proceeding slowly to his quarters, when, at a cross road, he was fired at from behind, and struck by several pistol bullets at the point of the right shoulder, some of them almost traversing the body.† The assassin mounted and rode off, but missing his way, spent all night in roundabouts, was seized the next morning, and recognised as Jean Poltrot, Sire de Meré. He was of dark complexion and small stature, resembling a Spaniard, and for this reason employed as a spy, especially in Spanish armies. He had received money for this purpose both from Soubise and Coligny. Put to the torture, Poltrot accused the latter of having prompted him to the act. The admiral, then in Normandy, repudiated the charge with calm contempt. He had "never stooped to employ assassins, nay, had often dissuaded men from such acts; but," added he, "the late Duke of Guise had caused the murder of so many Protestants in cold blood, that latterly he did not think he could have dissuaded a man from attacking him."‡ So cold a disclaimer made the

* Guise's account in letter to Gonnor, Feb. 7, MSS. Colbert, v. xxiv; and to Marshal Montmorency, MSS. Bethune, 8703.

† Letter of Catherine to Cardinal de Guise. Ibid. For death of Guise see MSS. Dupuy, 333.

‡ No doubt could rest on any impartial mind, that considered Poltrot's assertions and Coligny's circumstantial refutation of them, of the high-minded innocence of the latter. Yet so does fanaticism blind the judgment, that Pasquier takes

CHAP. XXIII.

admiral an object of increased hatred to his foes. The charge, moreover, was too useful a pretext for the friends of Guise to allow it to drop. As to the duke, he lingered six days, attended by the queen mother and his brother, the cardinal, and expired on the 24th. The complete collapse of the party after his death, proves that Guise was everything to it. His activity, resolution, and capacity, both as a general and as an administrator, were fully seen when they could not be replaced. His ascendency and value as a party leader were probably due to the sincerity and wholeness of his fanatic belief, which he indeed more than once condescended to dissemble for politic purposes;—it was the habit of the age;—but though his convictions might not be so high, so pure, and so honourable as those of Coligny, both chiefs were equally ardent in the support of their antagonistic principles and creed.

Whilst Guise was snatched from the Catholics, Coligny's authority was suspended, partly no doubt by his own absence in Normandy, and his lead ignored by the Huguenots. Catherine lost no time in opening negotiations with Condé and bringing him and Montmorency together*, both anxious to escape from captivity at any price. To do Catherine justice, she was ready to make all the concessions to the Protestants that her party would sanction or her influence allow. But this fell short of the edict of January. Instead of the full tolerance of that statute, Catherine could now only grant Protestant worship in those towns in which it had been practised up to the 7th of that month, thereby proscribing it in those that had been conquered, such as Blois, Tours, Montauban, and some of the most Protestant

advantage of one of the admissions of the frank and truth-loving admiral, to call his exculpation incomplete. Capefigue goes farther, and builds up a little romance of his own, which represents Poltrot as one of the admiral's intimates, and even sharing his tent!

* Catherine's letter to Gonnor, March 4.

centres of the kingdom. Except in the few places where the reformed worship was still maintained, Catherine could now only sanction its celebration in one spot of each bailiwick, and that always in the suburbs. Gentlemen, however, were permitted to celebrate whatever rites they pleased in their own châteaux, for their own families and subjects. The Treaty of Amboise, concluded the 19th of March, 1563, was thus an edict of toleration for the upper class, and but a very restricted allowance of it for townsfolk. The Huguenot clergy were indignant. Coligny was equally so when he learned the terms, telling the Prince of Condé "he had destroyed more Protestant temples by a stroke of the pen than ten years of war could have accomplished." Condé consulted merely the gentlemen of his party, and obtaining their assent, left the clergy and townsfolk to acquiesce or demur as they pleased. There was nothing left for them but the former. What hopes indeed could there be for the triumph of a religion whose chief force lay amongst the townsfolk, whilst that class were neither summoned to stand forth for their creed in the field, nor consulted in the time of negotiations? The strength of a religious party exists in its fanaticism, that is, in the fanaticism of its followers, wisely directed. But the zeal of the French Protestants was left to vent itself from the pulpit, in the breaking of images or supplying its victims to the stake, instead of being called to exert its daring in the field. The French Protestant cause, thus managed and thus betrayed, was, from the very outset, certain of, and doomed to, defeat.*

* An eminent writer, Mr. Buckle, thinks the failure of Protestantism in France, and its success in England, chiefly owing to the superior power retained by the clergy in the former country. I cannot acquiesce in this view. The French Church had, in consequence of the Concordat and the efforts of the legists, sunk into complete subservience to the crown, and Francis the First, however it might have embroiled him with the Pope, would have found it as easy to destroy the French as Henry the VIII. found it to overturn the English. But he had not the same

CHAP. XXIII.

temptation. The prelatures were in his gift; these and their abbeys were disposed of among diplomatists and courtiers, whilst benefices became a matter of sale, and a source of revenue, like any other office. Francis did not want to take what was already at his command, nor did he wish to fling St. Peter's irrecoverably into the hands of the House of Austria. The French noblesse were equally interested with the king in maintaining the old church as it was, that is, at the king's disposal and their holding. The outcry of the Huguenots was against the ecclesiastical revenues and dignities remaining in the hands of the gentry. They confiscated them wherever they had the power; and this was one of the great causes of the noblesse, especially of the north turning against them. The Papal church was defended far more by the crown, and by the aristocratic party which rallied to the Guises, than by the clergy, who only recovered power as the struggle advanced, and as princes and nobles in the struggle were obliged to put forward Church and clergy as pretexts and stalking-horses.

CHAP. XXIV.

FROM THE PEACE OF AMBOISE, 1563, TO THE DEATH OF CHARLES THE NINTH, 1574.

WHILST the cause of the French middle classes was betrayed by the princes and nobles, in whom they trusted, and their claims to even tolerance diminished and disallowed, the views of religious reform, entertained by enlightened Catholics, suffered a defeat equally signal. These, on more than one occasion, had nearly succeeded in obtaining papal sanction for the abandonment of much that was exorbitant and erroneous in Roman ritual and dogma. In the first assembly of the Council of Trent many enlightened Catholics thought upon justification much as Luther did. Others were for examining, not denouncing, his ideas respecting the Eucharist and the adoration of the Virgin.* The expediency of forbidding marriage to the priesthood, and of communicating the cup to the laity, were open questions. But opinions suggested by moderation, and admitting compromise, were soon exploded from the Catholic mind. How yield to any, even the smallest of Protestant objections, and then draw a line, beyond which there was to be no further concession? How, for example, grant the cup to the laity, without making the wine in the sacrifice of the mass an object of equal adoration with the bread?

* See in Sarpi the floundering of all parties, Lutherans included, on the question of original sin, and the quarrel between the Dominicans and Franciscans respecting the Virgin.

CHAP. XXIV.

And how do this, without altering and confessing the erroneousness of the traditional ceremony? Such considerations had induced even Churchmen of moderate tendencies to forsake the middle path, and eschew either argument or persuasion. Force could alone preserve the unity of the Church. Wielded by the Inquisition, it had already effectually banished heresy from Italy and from Spain, and convinced the ruling powers, at least of the South, that merciless violence offered the only means of combating the evil. But whilst what Rome considered orthodoxy triumphed south of the Alps and Pyrenees, Protestantism reared itself in the North as inexpugnable, and almost as fierce. To the summons of the Pope to abandon their convictions, the Reformers had long since replied by defiance and the sword. Rome, on the other hand, restored to purity of life and sincerity of fanaticism by the danger which threatened and the poverty that had befallen it, might be said to have recommenced the dark and monastic ages. All compromise between it and the world of new ideas was at an end.

Holding the middle place between these antagonists, France still retained the hope of reconciling them long after that hope was vain. Catherine of Medicis certainly adopted the measure most likely to lead to reconciliation, that of holding a national council apart from foreign interference. And had she completely excluded the foreign element, in the persons of both Beza and the Jesuit Lainez, from the Colloquy of Poissy, it might have had a better chance of success. The experiment failed, and she was obliged, in consequence, to send envoys anew to the General Council of Trent, which the Pope, in dread of national synods, had hastened to convoke. Even then the governments of France and Germany did not abandon hopes of reconciliation. Catherine had previously demanded the cup for the laity, and the abolition of the procession of the

Holy Sacrament.* The Emperor had not only insisted on the cup, but obtained a promise from the Papal legate that it should be granted, and he also abetted the marriage of priests, as well as a change with regard to the Eucharist.†

Nor did Catherine stand alone in the French court to demand concessions from Rome. The Cardinal of Lorraine himself, the head of the Catholic party in France, consented to proceed as one of the king's envoys to Trent, and to follow instructions which the King of Navarre had drawn up. These directed him to join the imperial ambassador in requesting that the cup should be given to the laity, the Sacrament administered in the vulgar tongue, sermons and psalms preached and sung, and, if the marriage of the clergy was still to be prohibited, their ordination should be deferred till they were of such an age as would check the present glaring state of clerical immorality. The Duke of Guise himself affixed his signature to these instructions.‡

The Cardinal of Lorraine went farther. He aimed at a reformation of the conclave, and a change in the mode of electing Pope and nominating cardinals, which would render them and the government of the Church less exclusively Italian.§ The Pope and the Italian majority of the council feared these innovations or reforms more than heresy itself, and denounced the Cardinal of Lorraine as determined to humble the papacy, because it had refused to invest him with legatine power in France. But with whatever intentions the Cardinal of Lorraine proceeded to Trent, he was soon induced to rally to Papal interests. The plans for the reform of the Roman, and the liberation of the Gallican Church, were chiefly conceptions of the King of Navarre, whose

* Fra Paolo Sarpi, l. v.

† Soranzo, vol. x. of Relazione Venete, p. 141, &c.

‡ MSS. Colbert, M.R.D., vol. xvi.

§ Charriere, Négociations dans le Levant, t. ii. p. 712.

CHAP. XXIV.

death released the Cardinal from the necessity or policy of supporting them. The Italians also made him large personal offers, of the legatine authority which he desired, and of the nomination of any two cardinals he might name.* The murder of his brother occurring soon after, and necessarily flinging Protestants and Catholics into irreconcilable antagonism, completed the political conversion of the Cardinal of Lorraine to Rome. The emperor was at the same time won over by the wily Morone; and all the powerful champions of reform in the Church having been silenced or bought, the doctrines, the dogmas, and the authority of the Church were remoulded and stereotyped at Trent in the antiquated shape and retrograde spirit of the exclusively Italian, inquisitorial, and bigoted portion of its clergy. "Catholicism previously," says Ranke, "contained in its bosom much of the liberal ideas and elements of Protestantism. These were, henceforth, excluded altogether."

This determination of the General Council in the sense of ultra-Catholicism and ultra-Montanism, rendered it exceedingly difficult for Catherine of Medicis to hold by the policy of moderation. And had not the death of Guise deprived the French Catholics of an efficient leader, she could not even have attempted it. She gathered strength, however, from some events, the chief of which was the re-capture of Havre from the English. Condé had stipulated, that whenever Elizabeth gave up this town, she was to have Calais restored.† But Condé, who with his usual fickleness had listened and trusted to Catherine's allurements‡, denied

* Soranzo, Relazione Venete. Whether the cardinal's conduct proceeded from weakness, hypocrisy, or from a gleam of true liberality, forms matter of dispute. For his defence see his biographer, Guillaume.

† Camden; Treaty in Forbes' Elizabeth, vol. ii. p. 50.

‡ Condé was fed with hopes of lieutenant-generalship in France, and of marriage with the Queen of Scots. Camden. Nicholas Pithou recounts a scene with Condé and

the treaty, and sent Bricquemaut to England, with offers of repayment of the money advanced by the queen, on condition of her restoring Havre.* The prince threatened, in case of refusal, to besiege the town himself. Elizabeth replied by forwarding to the French court a copy of her treaty with Condé and Chatillon, and is said to have also taunted Catherine by a kind of personal challenge. "She is Florentine, I am English; let us see which will triumph."† It was the Florentine that triumphed. Havre was poorly fortified. The plague incapacitated the English garrison from defence, carrying off all its officers, and a hundred men a day, so that Warwick was compelled to surrender on the condition of the remainder being sent to England, leaving their artillery behind.‡ This disaster, coupled with the conduct of the Huguenots, Condé having fought in the trenches against Havre, much disgusted the English queen. She insisted, indeed, for some time, on the renewal of the engagement made at Cateau Cambresis respecting Calais; but the French would not hear of this, and the treaty was concluded between her and Charles the Ninth, at Troyes, in the April of the following year, 1564. The question of Calais was passed over in silence, the hostages being set free in England, and Throgmorton in France. Elizabeth was contented with an indemnity of 120,000

Catherine about this time. There had been religious disturbances at Troyes, and the Protestants maltreated. Pithou went to complain, but Condé believed the account which he had heard from the Cardinal de Guise. Pithou defended the Protestants. "Alors la reine," says Pithou, "se tournant vers le Prince de Condé, lui dit avec un tremblement de tête, 'Mon cousin *comme à la Rochelle*,' c'est à dire, qu'il fallait mettre hors la ville de Troyes les plus enroidis, comme on avait fait à la Rochelle."

* Warwick to Dudley, Forbes, vol. ii. p. 390.

† Chantonnay's Letters, Mem. of Condé.

‡ Warwick's letters in Forbes. "There were not 5000 English survivors of the mortality, the half of whom could scarcely be hoped to pass the sea, so extenuated and ill were they." Boistaillet, Despatch, MSS. de l'Arsenal.

CHAP. XXIV.

crowns, although complaining that the Huguenot alliance had cost her 400,000.*

The circumstances under which the Treaty of Amboise had been concluded were not of a nature to render it an equable accord or a lasting pacification. The Catholics felt the campaign to have been one of triumph, only interrupted by the death of the Duke of Guise. Hence an increase of military arrogance, which could not brook equality with a party considered to have been defeated. The Huguenots were in discredit. The Prince of Condé augmented it by his mean conduct in fighting against the English whom he had called to his aid, as well as by his dissolute life. He had seduced Mdlle. de Limeuil, one of Catherine's maids of honour, and was by her induced to slight his family and friends. The Guises affected to consider Coligny as the suborner of Poltrot, and fiercely demanded his punishment or trial. The young king was obliged to put a stop to recriminations by taking upon himself to pronounce judgment at a future period. The Catholic generals (*maistres de camp*), such as Strozzi and Brissac, refused to obey D'Andelot, as commander of the infantry, because he was an heretic.

Whilst such was the tone and conduct of the dominant party at court, it was of course more arbitrary and oppressive in the provinces. By the treaty, the Huguenots had agreed to disarm and give up the towns they held. The first care of their enemies was to build up one of the gates of Orleans into a fortress, so as to preclude the possibility of the city's being made the stronghold of another rebellion. Similar orders were issued with respect to Lyons and Montauban. La Rochelle itself was garrisoned. At Bordeaux, a Protestant

* Chantonnay; Rymer. Smith's Correspondence in State Papers. It may be mentioned, that Smith during this embassy sent the *Nues* of Ronsard, the arch poet, to Cecil. The ambassador, De Foix, also gave a copy to Elizabeth.

minister was hanged. In Languedoc the Maréchal Damville, who afterwards became the chief of the moderate party, was then so full of the military intolerance of the period, that he denied the Protestants most of the rights and indulgences promised them. The parliaments were even more hostile; that of Dijon, prompted by the Duc d'Aumale, governor of the province, refused to register or observe the treaty. And as late as December, the king was obliged to send letters to Damville, insisting on its being registered at Toulouse.* Even in the provinces near the capital, the execution of the edict was obstructed. In Touraine, the Huguenots could not continue to celebrate their rites without danger. At Vendome, the Protestant governor for the Queen of Navarre was assassinated. Governors almost universally evaded the edict, by either refusing to appoint places for the reformed worship, or fixing upon such as, from remoteness, or the bigot antagonism of the inhabitants, were impossible for the Huguenots to frequent.†

In the upper regions of politics the difficulties in the way of toleration were no less great. On former occasions Catherine could meet Catholic remonstrance by appealing to a future council. Such pretext was no longer available, the national council having failed, and the general Assembly of Trent had come to conclusions which prohibited alike moderation or tolerance. The Cardinal of Lorraine had now but the one banner, the one tenet of policy, the adoption and enforcement of the Decrees of Trent. The chancellor De L'Hôpital withstood in the royal council all such demands, which amounted to no less then tearing asunder the late treaty, and recommencing the civil war. When the

* MS. Bethune, copied in MS. Fontanieu, 307–308.

† Mem. of De Thou, D'Aubigné, Mém. de Castelnau, with additions of Laboureur, Tavannes, Letters of Calvin, of Pasquier, and the collection called the Mémoires de Condé.

CHAP. XXIV.

chancellor charged the cardinal with thus wilfully seeking to supersede peace by bloodshed, the latter retorted with abuse, calling his antagonist a *belître*.

Whilst the Catholics were thus urgent, the Prince of Condé was no less so for the realisation of the hopes held out to him by Catherine. He expected to be appointed lieutenant-general of the kingdom, and to be invested with the political influence of his brother. To frustrate his ambition, as well as to assume authority for resisting the cardinal, Catherine had caused her son, Charles the Ninth, to be declared of age by the parliament of Rouen in August, 1563, that of Paris being too froward and hostile to make such a proclamation, against which, indeed, it did not fail to protest. The Cardinal of Lorraine and his family took the opportunity of once more pressing for the acceptance of the decrees of Trent, and, being again refused, they made it the pretext of withdrawing from court. Catherine, anxious to conciliate, conferred the office of grand master of the palace upon the young Duke of Guise, as, indeed, she had promised to the expiring duke Francis. The result of this was to offend the constable, who had originally held the office, and who, on his redemanding it in vain, retired in dudgeon to Chantilly.* The court was deserted, and although the admiral sought permission to pay his respects, the king was obliged to decline receiving him, till the accusation directed against him by the Guises had been disposed of. To fill the seats at the council table, from whence the magnates had either withdrawn or were eliminated, Catherine appointed men unconnected with the aristocracy, De Retz, Lansac, and Crussol, as functionaries not likely to cabal against her, or to aim at undue influence over the young monarch. Tavannes, in whose memoirs this policy

* Catherine's letter to St. Sulpice, May 1563, MSS. Dupuy, 523, fol. 21.

is explained, was the general on whom she counted to uphold it.*

In the capital, as in the royal castles upon the Loire, this isolation of the king and court might have produced a bad effect. Catherine determined to bring the young king on a kind of progress through his southern provinces, where he might appease sedition and put down usurped authority by his presence, and where some judgment might be formed of the aims and character of party leaders, and some estimate of the strength which they might wield, for good or for evil. It was at first arranged that the court should go to Lorraine, and by the royal visit compliment and conciliate the Guises; but these took advantage of the king's coming to propose a meeting at Nancy of the princes and statesmen most zealous in the Catholic cause. Catherine deprecated such a congress, the chief aim of which would have been to compel her to recommence persecution in obedience to the decrees of Trent. The Spanish and Papal envoys came to Fontainebleau to press this advice. The queen gave them fair words, and the court proceeded to Champagne in March, 1564.

It at once fell amongst the strife of the contending sects. The place of worship for the Huguenots of Troyes had been fixed at Ceans, seven leagues distant, in a wild forest. D'Andelot, whose château and estate lay at Tanlay, in this vicinity, had asked permission for his co-religionists to have their *prêche* in the suburbs of Troyes. This was refused by the Duke

* It was at this time, that Catherine caused the palace of the Tournelles to be destroyed, and the building of the Thuilleries commenced. Her eagerness for the completion of this new palace is evinced in a letter to the provost of the Merchants, of December, 1564, in which the queen entreats the Parisians not to spend all their care and money in fortifications, but to erect the wall and make the paved road along the "*Bons Hommes*," which were to enclose her gardens of the Thuilleries. MSS. Bethune, 1710.

CHAP. XXIV.

D'Aumale, one of the Guise brothers, governor of the province. Advantage was taken of the king and queen mother's visit to renew the demand. "What is the number of Huguenots in Troyes?" asked the queen of the deputies. "Five thousand," replied Pithou. "You lie, *paillard*," exclaimed Aumale, "and I shall hang you up to this window." "It can be easily proved by the register of the tallage," was the only rejoinder of Pithou. Catherine durst not grant so fair and moderate a request; and Aumale persisted in executing the edict so rigidly, that he would not permit Protestant pastors to enter the town, either to instruct the young, or attend the sick and the dying.*

Catherine saw, as she advanced into the provinces, that the Catholics were the stronger party, and that it was not politic to brave them. She gave orders in consequence to change the preceptors charged with the education of her children, substituting more orthodox ones. Soon after an edict was issued from Roussillon in Dauphiné, ordering governors of provinces no longer to delay fixing places for Huguenot worship. To these the edict strictly confined the permission. Synods were forbidden, whilst monks and nuns who had quitted their convents and married, were enjoined to return to their cells.†

Catherine had another motive for favouring the Catholics at this time. She feared the enmity of Philip the Second‡, and hoped so far to conciliate him in an interview, which she besought him and his queen to hold with her court at Bayonne, as to obtain the hand of a Spanish princess with an appanage for her second son, the Duke of Anjou. Philip, however, was in no good

* Vie de N. Pithou.

† Edict in Fontanon. Claude Haiton (t. i. p. 380) tells how much the royal progress encouraged the Catholics and intimidated the Protestants in Dauphiné, Provence, and Languedoc.

‡ Catherine writes in May to Damville, in fear lest the maritime preparations of Spain might be directed against France. MSS. Bethune, 8703.

humour with the Court of France, which refused to adopt and carry out the decrees of Trent, and whose envoys assumed precedence at Rome over those of Spain.* Moreover, the late peace which left the French Huguenots leisure to excite and succour their brethren of the Low Countries, was highly inimical to Spanish interests. Philip, therefore, did not accompany his queen, Elizabeth, Catherine's daughter, to Bayonne, but sent the Duke of Alva in his stead.

The Protestants suspected at the time, and have never ceased to assert since, that Catherine and Alva agreed at Bayonne upon a joint plan for the extirpation of themselves and their religion. Alva's own account to his sovereign of this interview† attests, on the contrary, that both Charles the Ninth and his mother declined engaging in any policy which would reopen the war, and that even when Alva concentrated his demands upon the removal of the Chancellor De l'Hôpital, that great aim of the Cardinal of Lorraine, Catherine refused to accede to it. Alva at the same time evaded the demand of a Spanish princess for the Duke of Anjou. He appealed from what he considered the lukewarmness of Catherine to the zeal of several of her courtiers, some of whom recommended the cutting off of five or six heads as the only remedy for the anarchy of the country. But Catherine was far, as yet, from sympathising with the political morality of the half Jesuit, half executioner.‡

* The Duke of Alva prayed Philip to pardon the Pope for sanctioning this. He feared to give any pretext to Charles the Ninth for shaking off the authority of the Holy See. Gachard, Corresp. de Philip II., tom. ii. p. 315.

The Pope's envoy prayed Philip to go to meet Catherine; the king evaded the demand, saying he knew the French king's council to be contrary to religion. Dépêches du Sieur de St. Sulpice from Madrid, MS. Dupuy, 523, fol. 88. See Secret Notes of Occurrences at Bayonne, June, July, 1565. S. P., France.

† Papiers de Granvelle, tom ix. p. 281. The interview took place in June 1565.

‡ "As to those," writes Alva to Philip, "whose heads it is advisable

CHAP. XXIV.

It was necessary, however, to reduce to some degree of obedience those Protestant regions which refused to pay taxes, yet levied contributions for their own purposes, as well as to secure those Catholic towns which were exposed to Huguenot assaults. Whilst the king was at Lyons, he caused a citadel to be built there.* The orders which he issued for the demolition of the fortifications of Montauban could not be executed until he came thither in person.† And when the court visited the maritime provinces around La Rochelle, the Catholic population took advantage of its protection to hear mass and have their children baptized, advantages which the Huguenots had withheld from them for many years.‡

On their return in the first days of 1566, Catherine flattered herself that her own policy and the king's journey had attained the great object of pacification. What had given her most trouble in the first civil war and in the lifetime of Guise, was the frowardness of the Parisians and their parliament. Guise had armed them to the number of 30,000.§ This formidable militia the Marshal de Montmorency, commanding in Paris for the king, succeeded in disarming, and sending all their weapons to the bastille.‖ The majority of the king, the

to strike off, one must dissemble with them till the thing can be done." On a subsequent occasion, Charles the Ninth, offended by the bold remonstrances of Coligny, was heard to ejaculate that Alva was right, and that such audacious men ought to be slain.

* Instructions to Laubespine; St. Sulpice's Despatches; MS. Dupuy, 533.

† Abel Jouan. Recueil de Voyage de Roi Charles IX.

‡ Abel Jouan. Many of the children when baptized were old enough to respond to the priest.

A petition of the reformers of Bordeaux about the same time shows how they were treated. They beg "not to be molested for singing psalms," they entreat "not to be forced to swear on the armbone of St. Anthony, or any other relic *contraire à la religion*," they complain of having their children taken away from them to be baptized, and they pray that, according to the edict, they be allowed to join in municipal and other elections. MSS. Bethune.

§ Barbaro, Relazione di Francia.

‖ Catherine's letter to Montmorency. MS. Bethune, 8693, 8717.

continuance of peace, the absence of the court, as of all the grandees, the Guises included, from the capital, left the parliament without the pretext of turbulence. The Cardinal of Lorraine had indeed made an attempt to disturb this tranquillity by entering Paris with his guard of arquebusiers. Montmorency met and dispersed it at the corner of the Marché St. Innocent, the cardinal having been compelled to take refuge in the hotel Cluny, and subsequently to quit Paris.* Catherine summoned both Catholics and Huguenots to attend a solemn assembly of notables at Moulins, in February 1566, where the Chancellor de l'Hôpital, also flattering himself that the halcyon times of peace were come, promulgated his great and final edict of judicial reform.

Its provisions are greatly praised by legists, and they certainly had the merit of curtailing the judicial immunities of the clergy. But these laws of De l'Hôpital cannot but be highly unsatisfactory to the constitutionalist. The only surviving check to monarchic despotism was the parliaments. But these, at the time of the edict of Moulins, and in consequence of the ejection of all the moderate councillors by the Cardinal of Lorraine, were fanatic and illiberal, offering every opposition to the tolerance of Catherine and of the chancellor. Instead of undoing this by the reappointment of liberal and tolerant *conseillers*, De l'Hôpital subjected parliaments to the edicts of the sovereign, which he likened in authority to those of the Byzantine emperors, never alluding to the estates or to the early constitution of the kingdom, but seeking tolerance at the expense of liberty, and a remedy for aristocratic turbulence in the uniform absolutism of the prince.†

* Montmorency's account, MSS. Bethune, 8699; King's letter about it to Damville, MSS. Bethune, 8699.

† Fitzwilliam describes him as the ruler of France; letters to Cecil Oct. and Nov., *1566*. His power lasted till July, 1567, when he withdrew from court, on discovering some practices against him. Norreys to Cecil, S. P.

CHAP. XXIV.

At the same meeting Catherine sought to patch up the quarrel between the admiral and the Guises. Coligny came to court, and, as usual, he was no sooner present than influential. The king had reserved to himself to pass judgment on the charge of his having caused the assassination of the late duke. He now declared the trial quashed, and bade both parties embrace. Henry of Guise, however, took care to be absent on the occasion. How long Catherine might have been able to enforce the observance of peace on the chiefs of the rival parties is very doubtful. But it was soon rendered impossible by the insurrection of the religionists in the Low Countries, by the measures which Philip took to repress them, and the facilities towards accomplishing that end which Catherine could not refuse.

Philip asked permission for a Spanish army to march from Italy through Provence and Dauphiné into Franche Comté and to the Low Countries. That the Guises were in secret understanding with the Duke of Alva, who commanded this army, there is no doubt. They had agreed that, as soon as it should have arrived, they would proceed to court and hold a different language from their habitual one of submission.* But it is evident from Alva's letters, that Catherine, however consenting to the march of his troops, was by no means in accord with him. When she raised 6000 Swiss to observe their march,—a measure that Coligny consented to,—the Spanish commander was so alarmed that he proposed raising more from the Catholic cantons to oppose them.†

* Navarrete, Collecion de Documentos, t. iv, p. 371.

† Ibid., p. 370. Philip the Second first opened his designs to Fourquevaux, the French envoy. The latter informed his court that, notwithstanding the "fine" words of Alva, he must have some design deeper than the mere towns of Flanders. Despatches, MSS. Dupuy, 523. Norreys writes to Queen Elizabeth, August 1567, that the Cardinal of Lorraine, being now all in favour with the king, influenced him

The Huguenots saw in the march of these troops peril to themselves as well as to their brethren of the Low Countries. They had had intelligence of what was whispered at Bayonne,—the expediency of decapitating their leaders,—and when they learned that the Duke of Alva had no sooner arrived in Brussels than he immediately proceeded to arrest and imprison the Counts of Egmont and Horn, although the latter had prevented the Prince of Orange from standing forth in open resistance, they naturally began to entertain fears for their personal safety.

There is every appearance that Catherine and her son would have continued to respect the lives and fortunes of the Huguenots, and not withheld the small toleration they enjoyed, could the Prince of Condé have remained contented with the nullity to which the court condemned him. Catherine felt it but too convenient to rule without the aid or intervention of the Guises on one side, or of the Bourbons on the other. But the natural result of thus treating both, was to induce both to combine. And there are proofs that they did so early in 1565. It was in the spring of that year that the Cardinal of Lorraine met the rude rebuff from the Constable Montmorency in the streets of Paris. A letter written by Condé on that occasion expresses his sympathy, not for the constable, but the cardinal, and declaring his conviction that the union of the houses (of Bourbon and Lorraine) was more necessary than ever.* The cardinal proposed to accomplish this by a marriage between the prince and Mary Queen of Scots.†

against the wish of the queen mother, and that catholic centeniers were appointed in each town, with the view to put down the Protestants when the Spanish troops came. It was at the same time Charles refused to be head of the German Protestant League. S. P., France, 41. Norreys received instructions to encourage Protestants.

* Letter of Condé to his sister, the Abbess of Chelles, March 1565. State Papers, France, 40.

† Granvelle Papers, tom. ix., letter of May 1565.

CHAP. XXIV.

Her marriage with Darnley, however, soon after took place, and the Prince of Condé was offered a daughter of the Duke of Guise.* However he may have listened to such proposals, he did not finally accept them. His lightness of purpose appears from the circumstance of such negotiations and meetings having even taken place. They failed; Condé rallied to the admiral, and used every effort to induce him and the religionists—who certainly had reason for discontent—to rise once more in rebellion against the court and Catherine. Such proposals the admiral strenuously resisted and frequently defeated. But at the same time he lost, in consequence of his attachment to Condé, all favour with the young king. Charles turned from the admiral to the Guises, "and could neither ryde, go, nor eat without his cozen, the cardinal."†

Fully aware of his machinations, and seriously alarmed as well as provoked by his interviews and intrigues with the Guises, Catherine, no doubt, plotted to circumvent and arrest Condé, as he was bent upon depriving her of power. He was removed, in February 1567, from the government of Picardy, which was given to Damville. It was about this time, according to Davila, that Catherine instituted what was afterwards called the Cabinet Council. The Privy Council, Pasquier informs us, was, as well as the Order of St. Michel, swamped by the members whom the king, having no money to reward, thrust into these colleges. Catherine, therefore, appointed a council to meet in the king's chamber or cabinet, its first members being Anjou, De l'Hôpital, Lansac, Morvilliers, Laubespine, Malassise, Birague, and Secretary Villeroy. In this council were discussed the various plans for seizing

* Cardinal of Lorraine's letter to Duchess of Guise. MSS. Bethune, 8720, fol. 9. See Granvelle Papers, tom. ix.; letter of May 1565, for meeting between the Cardinal and Condé at Soissons.

† Norreys to the Queen, August 23, 1567.

Condé and those who sided with him. If Catherine was well-informed of the projects of the prince, he was not without friends in her cabinet council who told him of what was proposed, if not intended, against himself and his party.* He communicated them to his brother Huguenots, and Coligny, in presence of such evidence, was compelled to admit that the fate of Egmont and Horn was prepared for the prince and for himself. The admiral then threw the weight of his council to the side of extreme measures; he proposed and strenuously insisted on the expediency of seizing the king's person, thus nullifying at once the authority of Catherine and Guise, and at the same time precluding the necessity of civil war by becoming possessed of the paramount authority of the king.

The Huguenots were universally blamed for having failed to accomplish this at the commencement of the former war, and they now determined to be no longer open to the same reproach. A simultaneous attack upon the Swiss was also contemplated, as well as a general rising of the Huguenots in the provinces.

Michaelmas 1567 was the day appointed. But Catherine had early suspicion of what was meditated.† Castelnau avers that he especially warned the court of its danger, and that the courtiers mocked him. A decree, nevertheless, was issued on the 10th against the muster of troops and levy of funds.‡ A body of armed Huguenots having tried to get entrance into Metz, and marched south on being ejected from thence, added to the alarm, and on the 24th the court precipitately left Monceaux, intending to go to the Castle of

* De l'Hôpital (*personaggio principallissimo*, as Davila says) is supposed to be the member who betrayed them to Condé.

† She writes to Cossé on the 10th September, that she was going to Monceaux, but begs him not to say so, lest there should be an attempt to carry her off. MSS. Bethune, 8725.

‡ On the 4th she asked him what was the meaning of the 12,000 or 15,000 men assembled between Montargis and Chatillon. Ibid.

CHAP. XXIV.

Vincennes. Learning that the Huguenots were in force to intercept them, they resolved to await the 6000 Swiss that were hourly expected at Meaux. The Maréchal de Montmorency was sent to parley with the Huguenot chiefs, and so managed to delay them that the king had nearly reached Paris before they could advance to intercept him. They still made several attempts upon the royal *cortége*, which Charles rode to repel in person*, but the Swiss made too bold a front, and easily repulsed the foe. Charles the Ninth succeeded in reaching Paris in a high state of choler and excitement, swearing that he should never be put in such peril again, and that he would take care to make himself more respected by great and small.†

The Huguenots having missed their prey, mustered their forces at Claye. Some of them coming to the rendezvous, well nigh surprised the Cardinal of Lorraine, then on his return to Rheims. He escaped by the fleetness of his horse, leaving his plate and baggage to be plundered. From Claye, Condé and Coligny approached Paris and invested it on the north side, burning the mills and occupying positions up and down the river to stop the conveyance of provisions. Their headquarters were fixed at St. Denis. The first act of Catherine of Medicis in her alarm at the Huguenot onslaught was to apply to the Duke of Alva, who instantly despatched Gonzaga with promises that the request should be attended to.‡ Later, he offered 5000 infantry and a large number of horse for twenty or thirty days.

* Mémoires du Duc de Bouillon, who, yet a boy, was present.

† Letters of Bouchefort to the Duchess of Ferrara, giving an account of their retreat. MSS. Bethune, 8686.

That Charles was not previously inclined to violent measures appears in a letter of his to Faverolles, his agent in the Low Countries. It is dated September 13, and expresses surprise and disapprobation of the cruel acts with which the Duke of Alva inaugurated his government. Fontanieu, portf. 313.

‡ Navarréte Collecione, tom. iv. Alva's letters of Oct. 4.

If their services were required for a longer time he could only spare 1000 horse with Burgundian and Walloon infantry.* But as Alva accompanied these offers by a demand that certain fortresses be delivered to him, Catherine sent Ligneroles to say that 2000 would suffice. Later, on the 17th, when the Huguenots invested the north of Paris, she besought 3000 Spanish arquebusiers in addition, but Alva refused to send more than 1400 men under D'Arenberg, unless Catherine would consent "to make an end of the enemies of the Catholic religion."† To gain time for the arrival of such succours, Catherine opened negotiations with Condé, who replied by a demand for the convocation of the states-general in order to diminish the burdens that pressed upon the people; he asked that the nobles of the kingdom should not be sacrificed to strangers, and Italians preferred to them for every employ. Further attempts to negotiate made by the constable met with a similar result. The king, said the latter, could never definitively admit the existence of two religions in the country.

The court exerted itself to muster forces. Strozzi, with his regiment, had joined it from Picardy. The Duke of Nemours was bidden to bring his bands from Piedmont. The Parisians raised 4400 men.‡ The Duke of Savoy was asked for troops, and more Swiss were ordered to be raised. The constable thus found himself in Paris at the head of a force much superior to the Huguenots, whose camp Andelot had left with some 1500 of its best troops. They had not more than 1500 horse and 1200 foot, disseminated over a large space of ground, Coligny occupying St. Ouen, Condé himself St. Denis, and Genlis Aubervilliers. The constable

* Navarréte Collecione, tom. iv. Alva's letters of Oct. 10.

† Gachard, correspondence of Philip the Second, tom. i. p. 591. Philip the Second added a note of approbation to this passage.

‡ Letters Patent. MSS. Colbert, fol. 252.

CHAP. XXIV.

being informed the Huguenots were about to withdraw*, determined to attack them. Condé was advised by several of his officers to concentrate his small forces in St. Denis. He replied that he could not afford to be besieged, and that such an army as the constable's would take many hours to marshal, which in these November days would render the combat a brief one, and soon bring darkness as a cover for retreat.

He was right; for the attack not commencing till within two hours of sunset on the 10th of November†, the constable ordered his son, the maréchal, to advance with the Swiss upon St. Denis, directing his artillery against Genlis at Aubervilliers, whilst the Parisians in gilded arms and gallant accoutrements were posted towards St. Ouen. Against these masses the Huguenots drew up their soldiers in single line, *en haïe*, the number not allowing to double their ranks. When his arquebusiers had caused the Parisians some damage and confusion, Coligny charged into their phalanx and routed it. A Turkish ambassador, who viewed the battle from the heights of Montmartre, bore witness to the gallantry of the "Huguenot cavaliers, clad in white, who did not fear to attack or put to flight whole regiments."‡ The defeat of the Parisians allowed Coligny to fall upon the rear of the Swiss, which made their front ranks recoil from pressing Condé, whilst the latter, imitating Coligny's impetuous charge, the constable himself was entangled in the flight of the Parisians, overthrown and slain. His son, withdrawn from before St. Denis, came up in time to renew the battle, and caused the dying constable to be transported to Paris. The contest lasted till nightfall, when both sides withdrew, the royalists into the capital and the Huguenots to St. Denis.§

* Norreys.

† Charles the Ninth's account of the battle in a letter to the Duke of Nevers. MSS. Bethune, 8702.

‡ "The whyte coats passed cleane through and through the king's battel of horse." Norreys' account of the battle, with a sketch descriptive of it, in State Papers, France, 41.

§ The king in his letter claims

CHAP. XXIV.

Immediately after the battle of St. Denis, Count d'Arenberg arrived with the succours sent by the Duke of Alva, rendering it vain for the Huguenots to linger before the walls of Paris. They therefore marched by Montereau eastward to meet the *reistres*, whom the second son of the Count Palatine was bringing to the aid of the Protestant cause. The loss of their commander at first paralysed the royalists. The Guises held aloof, and made few exertions to interrupt the passage of the *reistres*, a service that Catherine demanded of them.* She appointed her second son, the Duke of Anjou, lieutenant-general of the kingdom, and of course of its armies (Nov. 17), with Tavannes and Strozzi† for his military masters. He followed the Huguenots as far as Vitry, but, owing to the dissensions of his officers, could not prevent their junction with Prince Casimir, Jan. 1568. The instant demand of the *reistres* was for money, of which the Huguenot chief had scant provision. The religionists, however, made a collection, and sacrificed whatever jewels and valuables they possessed to satisfy their greedy auxiliaries.‡ The reinforcement restored superiority to the Huguenots, and Catherine, being informed that the *reistres* could not be forced in their position, immediately recommenced her negotiations.§ There was urgent need of this, for whilst Condé kept the royal army in check, the towns and provinces of the south universally fell off from their allegiance. The Prince of Condé came to the Loire, recaptured Blois, and after a time laid siege to Chartres.

The Duke of Anjou and his army, unable to recover

the victory, as his *gens de pied* passed the night on the field.

* Castelnau.

† Davila mentions Carnavalet and Cossé as his guides. Tavannes no doubt exaggerated his own influence.

‡ Castelnau gives the same character of the *reistres* as of their chief:—"Passionate enough for the Protestant cause, but too avaricious and economical to give more than fair words without payment."

§ MSS. Colbert, 24, fol. 130. Anjou's letter of Dec. 10.

CHAP. XXIV.

the country south of the Loire, withdrew to Paris, and Catherine despatched Castelnau to procure succours from Duke John William of Saxony. This prince, who had been at the court of Henry the Second, and who was of the Confession of Augsburg, did not scruple to appear in the field against Calvinists. He came with 5000 Germans at Catherine's request. The queen mother was, however, naturally suspicious, and as much alarmed as pleased at their approach. She saw 6000 Calvinist *reistres* with the Prince of Condé before Chartres. If she brought 5000 more, also Protestant, to oppose them, these foreigners would be masters of the kingdom, and the rival leaders of the auxiliaries might come to an understanding for the purpose. To such a pass had the contempt of the upper classes of the French for their own peasantry and lower orders brought the country, that both it and they were at the mercy of German soldiers. And whilst Frenchmen were struggling, or supposed to be struggling, for their rights and creeds, which most interest and excite the mind of man, the population literally allowed itself to be set aside, and have its quarrels fought and decided by strangers. It has been before observed, that the exclusive employment of mercenary troops in Italy, and the little zeal or activity which they showed against each other, disgusted the princes of that country with war altogether, as the means of wringing advantages or crushing enemies. They in consequence had recourse to treachery and assassination. Catherine of Medicis was perhaps led by the same experience to the same line of policy and conduct. At all events she now, after duly consulting her astrologer, Novio*, made offers of peace, and there were forthwith acclamations in the Huguenot camp to accept them. The gentry and their retainers, who chiefly composed the army, who received no pay, and foresaw

* Norreys.

no battle, were most desirous of revisiting their homes threatened by their Catholic neighbours. The admiral and the Prince of Condé were for refusing the peace, which was proposed merely to get them to disarm and to dismiss their *reistres*. They were, however, as La Noue observes, overborne, and had no powers of resistance. The offers of the court to renew the terms of the peace of 1562 were therefore accepted. The Huguenots stipulated in turn to surrender the towns they had conquered, themselves to disperse and to disarm, and the *reistres* to be sent home, the court undertaking to pay them with the aid of 100,000 crowns, which the Protestants were to furnish. The treaty of Longjumeau was concluded on the 7th of March, 1568. And the Prince of Condé not only abandoned the siege of Chartres, but gave up Orleans, Blois, Auxerre, Soissons, La Charité, and with them almost all the advantages which the brief but well fought campaign had won.*

Peace, however, was more easy to sign than to enforce. The Duc de Nemours in his government refused to execute its conditions. The parliament of Toulouse hanged the messenger who came to signify the treaty. The Catholic garrisons which reoccupied Protestant towns, indulged in such excesses, and committed so many acts of vengeance and oppression, that the still independent towns refused to receive the royal troops or governors.† La Rochelle pleaded that it had always been exempt from a garrison, and was determined to continue so.‡ At the same time several of the regi-

* For the Treaty of Longjumeau, see, as well as printed annals, MSS. Colbert, 29.

† Pasquier enumerates amongst the bad results of these wars, the habit of appointing a governor to every little town, which was done at first, he says, 'to resist and keep down the Huguenots, and which in the sequel was converted into a mere instrument of police and local oppression. France still groans under what Pasquier depicted as an innovation. Pasquier's Letters.

‡ Letters of Rochellois, MSS. Colbert, 24.

CHAP. XXIV.

ments which had served under Condé, especially one commanded by Coqueville, took the road to the Low Countries to enter the service of the Prince of Orange. Marshal Cossé attacked, defeated, and hanged Coqueville. The court entered into engagements with the Swiss soldiers to maintain them as a permanent force, and sent them to garrison the towns upon the Loire.* A bull was procured from the Pope for the extirpation of heresy, and the sale of 150 millions of ecclesiastical revenue to enable the court to accomplish it.† These and other indications filled the leading Huguenots with alarm, both parties at the same time endeavouring to gain the king's young brother, the Duke of Anjou, to their side. The Cardinal of Lorraine promised him a large sum yearly from the Church if he would unite with it, and forbear to court the Huguenots. A descent on England to liberate the Queen of Scots, a marriage with her, and a successful claim in her name to the throne of England, were held out as an enterprise easy of achievement. To defeat these dangerous machinations of the Guises, the Constable Montmorency represented to young Anjou how much preferable it would be for him to demand the hand of Elizabeth, and reign as her husband. Montmorency communicated his plan through its envoy to the English government, which replied that it did not repudiate the overture, and that however little likelihood there might be of a result, still it was advisable to go on with it. In these negotiations Anjou was induced to betray the secrets of the court, and the admiral thus learned of a deep plot laid for his destruction.‡

* Fontanieu, portf. 313.

† Négot. de Cardinal Rambouillet. MSS. Bethune, 8750.

‡ Norreys' letter to the Queen, June 7, 1568. After stating the admiral's account of the cardinal's offers to Anjou, and his design upon England, Norreys proceeds:—"The admiral gives your highness to understand of great practices of late, to surprise the nobility here; that the Prince of Condé was sought to be entrapped by La Valette, L'Amiral by Chavigny, D'Andelot by

Warnings from other quarters were not wanting. Tavannes himself, on receiving orders to arrest Condé and Coligny, states in his memoirs, that he warned them of their danger. They escaped in consequence, the one from Noyon, the other from Tanlay, with their wives and children, and narrowly avoiding capture as they passed the Loire, with some difficulty succeeded in reaching La Rochelle, August 1568. This town, surrounded by a Protestant population and "within twenty-four hours of Falmouth," consequently open to English succour from sea, became henceforth the stronghold of the Huguenot party.

From hence the chiefs issued a hasty summons to the Reformers, who were generally as eager to commence a new war as precipitate to terminate one in full operation. A provocatory edict issued by the king, prohibiting any religion save the Catholic, and confiscating the property of all who professed dissentient tenets, gave a stimulus to their zeal. It was at this time the Chancellor de l'Hôpital withdrew from court and from the duties of his office to his retreat at Vignay, after refusing to sign a decree banishing Protestant pastors. The Huguenots rose in all parts of the south, and showed no more mercy to their enemies than had been shown to them. D'Andelot, Montgomery, the Vidame de Chartres, and La Noue brought 2000 foot and 800 horse from Britanny and the adjoining provinces south of the Loire. Mouvans raised a large force in Dauphiné, and although it was defeated and dispersed by the Duke of Nemours, considerable numbers of it rallied to the Prince of Condé. The Queen of Navarre traversed Gascony with 3000 foot and 400 horse,

Tavannes and Barbassière. Being advertised, the scheme was frustrated, but they were so sure of it, that the regiment of Genlis was promised to Villeroy, and the government of the Isle of France, which Montmorency was to lose, was to be given to Anjou."—*State Papers*, France, 43.

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CHAP. XXIV.

accompanied by her young son of fifteen, the future Henry IV. Him she solemnly presented to the people of La Rochelle as a soldier of the Prince of Condé for the present, and for the future, if required, a princely leader.

If the Huguenots were the first to be formidable, and to make use of their strength in reducing the towns between the Loire and Garonne, the Catholics were not idle. Catherine spared no effort to muster a formidable army for her son, the Duke of Anjou, who, as lieutenant-general, was to command it. The Pope had provided funds; Spain, Savoy, and Germany furnished troops, and in the spring of 1569 the royalist army outnumbered that of Condé, which was still 20,000 strong. After several skirmishes and encounters during the month of March the armies manœuvred in each other's presence between Angoulême and Cognac, the river Charente separating them. The aim of the Huguenots was to prevent their enemies crossing it. But the officer, charged with observing the broken bridge of Châteauneuf, having dispersed his men in too distant quarters, the Duke of Anjou repaired the bridge and brought his army over it in the night of the 12th of March, 1569. Perceiving, at dawn, that the royalists had effected a passage, D'Andelot attacked them, but with very insufficient force. The admiral came to his aid, but at the same time reinforcements joining the Catholics, whilst the Prince of Condé could only come up from Jarnac with half his force, the Duke of Anjou was able to bring the whole of his army into action. The Huguenot chiefs sought to compensate by their audacity for having allowed themselves to be surprised, the Prince of Condé himself fighting with desperate valour. Although his leg had been broken by the kick of a horse he charged the enemy's vanguard, checked and drove it in, but was immediately attacked in flank by the Duke of Anjou's battle of gens-d'armerie. The

Huguenots were thrown into disorder, and Condé, whose horse was slain, fell under it. His followers rallied to rescue him. But what, says D'Aubigné, could 200 gentlemen do with 2000 enemies in front, 2500 *reistres* on one side, and 800 lances on the other? Two-thirds perished. The Prince of Condé had surrendered to an officer and received his word for protection and safety. But Montesquieu, of the Duke of Anjou's guard, probably sent expressly, came up, and, putting his pistol to the prince's head, shot him on the spot.*

Though possessed of all the gallantry of his family, the Prince of Condé could not be considered either skilful as a general, or firm as a politician. Nor could a new and struggling religion have made choice of a more unfit or a more imprudent chief. Fortunate would it have been for the religionists had Coligny had the influence or the character requisite for assuming the supreme authority. The military command he did, indeed, take in the name of the young Prince of Navarre, whom his mother presented to the armies, and who was accepted as nominal head. But Coligny was neither a favourite of the nobles, nor had he the confidence of the towns. He was a man of silent and serious character, like the Prince of Orange, far from suiting the French temperament, as that of the prince did the Dutch. Bred in camps, too, with the habits more of a soldier than a politician, Coligny had no idea of acquiring the confidence, working the resources, and infusing courage and confidence into the minds of the burgess class. And whilst broken in health he contrived to lead the motley army which he rallied after

* The Duke of Anjou's account of the battle of Jarnac is given from the Simancas Papers in the French archives, in the supplementary volume of La Mothe Fenelon's correspondence. Besides the printed accounts in D'Aubigné, La Popelinière, De Thou, Castelnau, Tavannes, La Noue, and Davila, see that in MSS. Colbert, 24, in which are bound up the original documents found on Condé's person.

CHAP. XXIV.

Jarnac, he did not acquire even over it the command requisite for the exercise of his genius as a general.

The Duke of Anjou and Tavannes were unable to take any signal advantage of the success of Jarnac. The Huguenot army, retreating into a country intersected by water, could not be pursued or attacked with effect. The Catholics tried to carry Cognac by assault, but received a rude repulse. Neither party was well provided with artillery, or with the means of prosecuting sieges; and both tried, as usual in these civil wars, to gain superiority from foreign aid. The Prince of Orange, previous to Jarnac, had penetrated into France, but failed to reach the Huguenot army. This task the Duke of Deux Ponts now undertook with more success, whilst the royalists sought to counterbalance such an accession of strength to their enemies by bringing a body of *reistres* under the Rheingrave, and some thousand Walloons from the army of the Duke of Alva. The marches and counter-marches of these foreign troops occupied the summer, the Dukes of Aumale and Nemours failing to intercept Deux Ponts, who, proceeding through Burgundy, passed the Loire at La Charité and formed his junction with the Huguenots. During the march, the Duke of Guise, making an attack with his cavalry at La Roche Maille, got exceedingly roughly handled, lost numbers of men, and injured his military reputation. The Protestants, as was always the case with the nobles of the party when they had been six months in the field, made overtures for treating. But the court rejected them, and replied by a sentence of condemnation and confiscation against the admiral and his adherents, with a reward of 50,000 crowns for his head.

Coligny then proposed to his partisans to seize and fortify a certain number of towns between La Rochelle and the Loire, and also to take and fortify Saumur as a permanent passage over the river, and thus secure the

means of transferring their army, when they pleased, into the region adjoining the capital. This had also been the desire and recommendation of Condé, but as La Noue observes, in the Protestant camp it was the plough that drove the horses, and Chatellerault having been taken without much difficulty, the nobles insisted upon investing Poitiers. In vain Coligny urged that it was too vast * and well garrisoned, and their means of offence too inadequate. His followers were resolved upon reducing the capital of the province, and the siege of Poitiers was decided on towards the end of July.†

The Duke of Guise had time to fling himself into the town before it was invested, with the hope to gain in its defence a name similar to that which Metz had won for his father. During the six weeks of hot weather that the Huguenots passed before Poitiers, vainly attempting its capture, the loss was great from epidemy, discipline and confidence being still more injured by the ill-success. Coligny at length seized, in September, the pretext of the enemy having invested Chatellerault to abandon the siege, and march to offer battle. The Duke of Anjou, or Tavannes, who guided him, refused for the moment, but in a short time the royalist army receiving reinforcements, and swelling to 45,000 men, according to D'Aubigné, but at least to two-thirds of that number, could offer battle in their turn to Coligny. The river Dives was between them. The royalists passed it at some distance, which allowed the admiral the opportunity of either retreating or taking up a strong position amidst marshes. His officers and nobles, however, would have him combat, and his *reistres* and lansquenets mutinying for pay on

* Davila says, that Poitiers was the largest town of the kingdom, in circuit, after Paris.

† For the campaign, see the letters of Crequy, of Catherine, and of Charles the Ninth, in MSS. Bethune, 8696 and 8679.

CHAP. XXIV.

the very morning of the action, the 30th of October, made it impossible to take any position beyond awaiting the attack of the enemy on the plains of Moncontour. As Tavannes rode forward to reconnoitre the Huguenots, he perceived their squadrons loosely arranged and the pikes of the lansquenets making a clatter against each other, the sign of a disorderly march and of irresolute soldiers. He advised an attack. Each army was in two divisions. Coligny, with what he called his van on the right, opposed to the Duke of Anjou, his reistres and gens-d'armes. Count Louis, of Nassau, the brother of the Prince of Orange, being with him, commanded the Germans in Coligny's army. But he unfortunately went to speak with the admiral just as the battle began, and could not get back to his troops.

A great cause of the success of the Huguenots in small encounters and their failure in long and decisive battles, was the habit of drawing up the cavalry, *en haie*, in one or two lines. The gentry who composed these made a gallant and impetuous charge, which swept away small obstacles, but was repelled by dense battalions. The German *reistres*, on the contrary, charged in thick squadrons, 1500 or 2000 together. Tavannes organised the cavalry of the royalist army in troops of 400 each, which he asserts to have been the best disposition. The infantry, which played an inferior part, often became, when the cavalry fight was over, the victors of the battle-field. At Moncontour the charges of the Huguenots, especially of the admiral, were successful at first, the Duke of Montpensier being checked on the left of the Catholics, and the Duke of Anjou* endangered on the right by the impetuosity of Coligny. But this charge not succeeding in making a complete rout, the enemy forced back their assailants by superior numbers. Coligny fought as a soldier whilst lead-

* Thrown to the ground, but raised by the Maréchal de Villars.

ing as a general. The Rheingrave meeting him at the head of an attack, discharged his pistol into his mouth, falling himself dead by his adversary's shot. The blood, which nearly choked Coligny, obliged him to be carried to the rear, whilst Louis of Nassau brought off the cavalry. The lansquenets paid the penalty of their mutiny, being chased and routed by the royalist cavalry, and then meeting no mercy from their rival mercenaries, the Swiss. The Duke of Montpensier wrote from the field that the Huguenots lost 5000 foot soldiers.* La Noue was taken, and his life saved by the Duke of Anjou.

In a council, which was held immediately after the battle, of the principal officers of the victorious army, some were for pursuing the Huguenots and giving them no time to rally. But that portion of the royalists, which consisted of nobles summoned by the rear ban, insisted on reducing the towns of the province held by the enemy. There was also a total want of money and supplies†, and the Duke of Anjou, having reduced Xaintes and the Castle of Lusignan, sat down before St. Jean d'Angelys. Fortunately for the Huguenots, the town had a gallant commander, who kept the royalists before it for the space of six weeks, notwithstanding that the king came to encourage the besiegers by his presence. The admiral made good use of the breathing time thus afforded him. The efforts of the Protestants during the summer campaign had

* In MSS. Colbert, vol. xxiv. The Count de Retz (La Mothe Fenelon, tom. i). swells these to 15,000, with eleven cannon. See Vrai Discours de la Bataille de Moncontour. This printed pamphlet will be found in Fontanieu, MSS. 320. There is an account of the battle by Norreys and by Champernoune in State Papers. See also La Noue, La Popilinière, Tavannes, Castelnau, and D'Aubigné.

† Secretary Villeroy writes from the camp on the 7th of October, four days after the battle, to the queen, to say, that if the army be not supplied it will disband. Those who participated in the booty of the reistres, 3000 of whose carts were taken, were already demanding to depart. MSS. Colbert, vol. xxiv.

CHAP. XXIV.

almost cleared the south. Montgomery had re-conquered Bearn, restored to the Queen of Navarre all her towns which had been captured, and brought to Coligny 3000 soldiers flushed with victory. The Huguenots had taken Nismes and La Charité, and were as successful in their local struggles as unfortunate in their pitched battles. The admiral passed the winter in Gascony, feeding and reposing his 3000 reistres, as well as the troops which joined him in Agen, Montauban, and Toulouse. The Catholic judges of the latter town had signalised their zeal by burning heretics. Coligny retaliated by the destruction of their residences. As spring opened, the admiral advanced towards the Rhine, with the intention of penetrating into Lorraine and placing himself in conjunction with the Prince of Orange and the German Protestants.

Such a result of the most strenuous efforts of the monarchy, seconded by powerful allies, in a campaign signalised by two victories, filled the mind of Catherine with perplexity. The most successful war could not put down the Protestant faction, and similar efforts could not be repeated in another campaign.* The King of Spain was occupied by an insurrection of the Moors. The German princes were roused by the Prince of Orange to ward off the danger of Catholicity becoming completely triumphant in France. In England, Elizabeth holding Mary in prison, and having lately defeated a conspiracy in her favour, was proceeding to crush the Catholic and French party in Scotland altogether. And if Charles the Ninth despatched forces thither, the English queen was certain to retaliate by

* The last campaign was chiefly met by ecclesiastical and Papal funds. These were expended. The Prince Dauphin wrote on the last day of 1569 that the Swiss were in mutiny for want of pay, and would not serve another winter. (Letter in Guichenon, Hist. of Savoy.) The Duke of Anjou in January, 1570, found the greatest difficulty in levying money from the people of Orleans to pay his army. MS. Fontanieu, portf. 321.

sending succours to La Rochelle. If Scotland was to be saved, wrote La Mothe Fenelon, peace must be made with the Huguenots.

Catherine, in consequence, opened negotiations with the religionists, and continued them during the winter of 1569-70. An accord was by no means so easy as in past times. There was no longer a facile prince of Condé to negotiate with. And the young king began to show opinions of his own, which were at first vehement and unconciliatory. Whilst Catherine and the Chancellor Morvilliers offered eight towns of surety to the Huguenots, Charles would allow not more than two or three.* The admiral, in the meantime, passed the Loire, defeated an attempt of the royalists to check him at Arnay le Duc, and advanced into Champagne.

The project of Coligny was, when reinforced by the Germans, whom Elizabeth lent money to raise, to pass to the westward of the capital, seize Rouen, and opening the Norman ports to communication with England, commence a formidable campaign against Paris and the strongholds of the Catholics in the north.† He was emboldened to this, and the court proportionately paralysed, by La Noue completely recovering the ascendency for the Huguenots in Poitou. The royalists having laid siege to Rochefort, La Noue sallied from La Rochelle and entirely defeated them under Puygaillard between St. Gemme and Fontenay. The result of the victory was the loss to the Catholics of every town in the province, save St. Jean d'Angely.

It is impossible to trace surely and minutely all the causes and events which influenced the vacillating policy of Catherine and of her sons. There are evident proofs, however, in May 1570, of the altered disposition of the court. Up to that period it had favoured the pretensions of the young Duke, Henry of Guise, to

* MS Bethune, 8741. † La Mothe Fenelon.

CHAP. XXIV.

espouse the Princess Margaret. Although defeated at La Roche Abeille, he had gallantly defended Poitiers, and been wounded at Moncontour. Margaret did not conceal her predilection for him, and their marriage would have suited well the alliance with Spain, whose monarch, Philip, placed especial trust in the Guises. The Duke of Anjou, who had had frequent quarrels with the Duke of Guise and the Cardinal of Lorraine during the campaign*, now denounced the marriage as an impolicy, and the young duke as audacious for pretending to his sister.† Charles took the same view with greater force, and bade one of his followers, the bastard of Angoulême, slay Guise. The latter warned and alarmed, instantly concluded an alliance which had formerly been arranged for him, with the widow of Prince Porcien, who brought him large possessions, among others the county of Eu.

At the same time that the breach took place between the court and the Guises, Queen Elizabeth consented to an amicable accord with France on the subject of Scotland. Both powers were to withdraw their forces from that country, and Mary was to be liberated on certain conditions.‡ As a portion of the agreement, Elizabeth asked the French king to grant to the Huguenots the terms of the Edict of 1567, with one *prêche* in the provostship of Paris. Charles demurred to this as well as to what afterwards became the subject of secret articles.§ But still there was every symptom of an approaching accord between the courts. The Cardinal of Lorraine exerted himself to break off these negotiations by obtaining from the Pope a hostile bull against Elizabeth, and causing it to be placarded on the Bishop of London's door.‖ Mary, too, instead of following the counsels of France, put her trust in

* Norreys to Queen, January 3, 1569.

† Simancas Papers, quoted by Capefigue. Bouillé, Hist. de Guises.

‡ La Mothe Fenelon.

§ Teulet. Correspondence, vol. iii.

‖ La Mothe Fenelon, Correspondence, t. iii.

Philip of Spain and in the conspiracies which he approved, and which he promised to support. This restored ascendency to Cecil and the ultra-Protestants in England, but did not prevent Charles and Catherine from signing the treaty of St. Germains (August 1570).*

By this treaty the Huguenot gentry were allowed the old liberty of celebrating the worship of their church in their private residences. The nobles holding supreme jurisdiction in their domains having a more ample right, all others were limited to a congregation of ten friends over and above their domestics. The reformed religion was maintained in those towns which had upheld it until the 1st of August, 1570, the month of the signature of the treaty. Two towns were to be appointed in other districts, in the suburbs of which the Protestants might have places of meeting. The right of worship was, however, forbidden where the court resided, as well as in and around the capital, so that in the Isle of France the Huguenots had but the suburbs of Beauvais and Cressy to meet in. Four places of surety were given them for two years, La Rochelle, Cognac, Montauban, and La Charité. In suits of law the Protestants had the right of challenging and refusing judges whom they considered hostile. There were, moreover, secret articles respecting the appointment of clergy to benefices, which the Huguenots had seized, and the ransom of church property which they had sold.†

The king took advantage of the repose which this treaty procured him, to conclude his marriage with Isabeau, second daughter of the Emperor Maximilian. Philip the Second of Spain espoused the other sister. But

* Walsingham was then sent to France. His instructions are curious, corrected, too, in Cecil's handwriting. S. P. France, 48.

† The Edict of Pacification is published in the Mémoires de l'Etat de France sous Charles IX.; the secret articles in MSS. Baluze, 238, or Fontanieu, 322–3.

CHAP. XXIV.

the alliance between France and Spain became not the closer. The Emperor disapproved of the rigorous policy of the Duke of Alva in the Low Countries, and lived on good terms with the German Protestants, who came to congratulate Charles on his marriage, as well as upon the peace he had granted to the Huguenots. The king made answer in language calculated to conciliate the German reformers.

In the same winter was revived Montmorency's old project of a marriage between the Duke of Anjou and Elizabeth. The Queen of Scots had shown herself averse to a French marriage or to French counsels, and seemed to centre her hopes and predilections in Spain. The Duke of Anjou resumed the project of proposing for the English Queen, and towards the close of the campaign he had entered into communications with Coligny. The first requisite for political importance and power was to stand at the head of a party. Catherine had striven to gain this position for the son whom she most loved, and by his success at the head of the Catholic armies, Henry of Anjou had fairly won it. But King Charles was jealous. He had assumed a considerable share of authority of late, and had used it to paralyse the efforts and set aside the superiority of his brother Henry. The latter, in consequence, "whose great mind could not be restrained to so little a territory as Anjou," * drew closer to the Huguenots, denounced the marriage of his sister with Guise, and proposed her union with the young King of Navarre, which had been the wish of the Montmorencies.† It was the Huguenots who, through the Cardinal of Chatillon, now proposed his marriage with Elizabeth. And they, as well as he, began to combine it with the conquest of Flanders. Chatillon would never have made such a proposal in England had not his party desired

* Norreys.

† Letter of the Vidame de Chartres to Norreys, Feb. 24, 1571. S. P. France, 49.

it, and had not that party some reason to reckon on the support of Anjou. They even held out to Elizabeth, as a bait, that the young French prince might be induced to forego the public exercise of his religion, in order not to shock the fanaticism of the English reformers.*

These efforts of the Duke of Anjou to take the Protestants for a stepping stone, since the king, his brother, seemed determined to be the Catholic champion, were made at first apparently without the cognisance of Catherine. When she did learn it, she placed herself at once in opposition, and bade her envoy, La Mothe Fenelon, support Leicester's claim to espouse Elizabeth. Later, she recommended that Anjou should marry some princess of the Seymour family whom Elizabeth might declare her heir, and thus knit the alliance of the two countries and two royal families. She soon, however, learned that Anjou himself was at the bottom of the intrigues, and that the king favoured them, whereupon she wrote to La Mothe to consider all she had said, as unwritten, and to keep her once offered advice profoundly secret.

The king was very zealous for the marriage of his brother with the English queen, which would remove him from court and from the lead of French armies and French politics. But when Anjou opened to him that portion of his plan which related to Flanders, the monarch was not so acquiescent. Henry of Anjou represented how facile would be the conquest of a province which Alva had irrecoverably alienated from the Spanish crown. Philip the Second, he said, had certainly caused their sister Elizabeth's death.† And the

* Cecil's letter, instructions to Walsingham. Harl. MSS. 260.

† La Mothe Fenelon, t. iii. p. 464. We learn from the correspondence of the Spanish ambassador Alava (Simancas Papers, B. xxix., Arch. Imp., Alava to Cayas, August 1571), that Catherine also believed Philip to have removed Elizabeth by poison. That king was capable of any crime,

CHAP. XXIV.

French mounted gentry were eager, he represented, to follow any prince who would lead them to the reduction of the French provinces of Flanders.

However zealous to promote his brother to a foreign throne, Charles was not prepared to re-invest him with the command of French armies, or facilitate for him the conquest of countries not very remote from his capital. Moreover, he liked as little seeing Henry at the head of the Huguenot party in France, as he had before contemplated his military chiefdom of the Catholics. And as jealousy had led him to deprive his brother Henry of the one, so he was determined to supersede him in the other also. Charles liked very well the idea of filching the Low Countries from Philip of Spain; but this project he proposed to execute himself, and to make use, in order to it, of the same Protestant alliance which Anjou had prepared.

In January of 1571, Cossé Brissac was despatched to La Rochelle for the avowed purpose of hearing the complaints and satisfying the grievances of the Huguenots—but really to sound them on the subject of a cordial alliance with the king, based on the marriage of the King of Navarre with the Princess Margaret, and a war with Spain for the Low Countries. Cossé met with much distrust, at which he was far from astonished. "The ground, however dry," observed he, "cannot all at once drink up the effects of the storm."* One of Cossé's difficulties was no doubt the previous understanding of the Huguenot chiefs with Anjou. But the king was so much better able to accomplish these designs, and he gave proof of such ardour to undertake them, that the Huguenots, after hearing the report of

provided he could find for it a political pretext. The sons and daughters of Catherine were manifestly unable to have heirs. This was quite sufficient reason for Philip to get rid of his wife summarily, as the cause of religion was the pretext for getting rid of his son Don Carlos.

* Pour-parlers de Cossé. Printed Papers in MSS. Fontanieu, p. 323.

several envoys*, civil and military, whom they had sent to court to acquire information and form a judgment, were of opinion that the offers of Charles ought to be accepted.

The king was careful to give every possible satisfaction. In a great many towns and districts the Catholics remained armed, and kept watch night and day at the gates to prevent the exiled Huguenots returning. Charles issued an edict ordering all to disarm, and allow the religionists to regain their homes.† The Catholics of Rouen having risen in tumult to assail the Protestants proceeding to the place appointed in the suburbs for their worship, the Maréchal de Montmorenci was sent to curb and punish their fanaticism. Troubles of a similar kind disturbed the town of Orange, and a similar remedy was not refused. The Huguenots were much harassed by the fifth levied upon them for repayment of the sums furnished to the *reistres*. Indulgence was shown them.‡ They were allowed to hold a synod at La Rochelle at the very time when Charles, with the young queen, made his solemn entrance into his capital. On this occasion the monarch, instead of chiming in with the ultra Catholic zeal of the magistracy and the inhabitants, took the opportunity of reading the former a severe lecture for demurring to his edicts, and dispensed with the citizens forming a guard for his person, as had been their habit or their privilege.§

As the summer of 1571 opened, Charles made a progress through several châteaux and royal residences,

* Téligny, Bricquemaut, and Cavagnes were the envoys. These three names will re-occur upon a melancholy occasion.

† Memoirs of Claude Haiton, p. 605.

‡ Notwithstanding these conciliatory acts of Charles, others betray precaution and mistrust. Jeanne D'Albret having complained of Villars keeping Lectoure, the king wrote to the latter privately to fortify the town, and render it secure. MSS. Bethune, 8733.

§ MSS. Colbert, 252.

CHAP. XXIV.

and summoned the Prince of Nassau, brother of the Prince of Orange, and recently in the command of the French Huguenots, to meet him at Lumigny, in order to discuss with him the facilities of reducing the Low Countries. Prince Ludovic offered the co-operation of the German Protestant princes towards the conquest of Flanders and Artois for France; Brabant, Guelderland, and Zealand falling to England*; and portions of this scheme for dividing the Low Countries between the House of Orange, France, and England, were the marriage of Queen Elizabeth with the Duke of Anjou, and that of the King of Navarre with the Princess Margaret. Coligny's presence and co-operation were necessary for this, and he and the Queen of Navarre were accordingly bidden to court.

The admiral felt a natural reluctance to trust himself amongst enemies who had so often sought to entrap him. The Cardinal of Lorraine was, however, no longer dominant, and the Duke of Guise himself withdrew on learning that the arrival of the admiral was expected. The Maréchal de Montmorenci seemed to succeed at court to the military and political influence which the Guises had once held†, and he recommended Coligny as the most valuable of political councillors. The latter, therefore, notwithstanding many warnings of his friends, repaired to the court at Blois in September, declaring that anything, even the chance of being deceived and sacrificed was preferable to a renewal of the civil war.‡

* Walsingham's letters to Burleigh, published in Digge's Complete Ambassador. Also his letters in Duke of Nevers' Memoirs, and in State Papers, France, 49 and 50.

† Alava writes to Alva, August 30, "Los de Montmorenci lo governo todo, sen que aya filo de la casa de Guisa a esta corte." Simancas Papers, Archives Imp. The same correspondence, February of the same year, 1570, recounts these efforts of the queen and Charles to conciliate Montmorency.

‡ Alava describes the admiral as entering Blois on the 12th of September, with 50 horse. "On entering the palace, those in advance asked for the king's apartment. 'No,' said the admiral, 'conduct

CHAP. XXIV.

The king received Coligny with an effusion of tenderness and respect. The monarch called him his father, and exclaimed, "Now we have you, you shall not again quit us." The admiral's domains of Chatillon sur Loing were small, and had been ravaged, as well as his château plundered, during the war. The king insisted on indemnifying him by a pension, and bestowing upon him a year's receipt of the ecclesiastical revenues of his brother, the Cardinal of Chatillon, who had lately died in England.* The admiral made use of his influence to press the king to the invasion of Flanders, arguing that he could never hope to allay domestic troubles without the distraction of foreign war.† The king seemed fully to adopt his views, which he proposed to carry out by the aid of the Huguenot party. The marriage between the King of Navarre and his sister Margaret was finally agreed. And when Coligny summed up the grievances of his fellow-religionists, Charles granted what was demanded in their General Articles.‡ He withdrew the garrisons which oppressed the Protestant towns of Languedoc. Several severe and ultra Catholic governors were recalled. Those of Provence and Dauphiné who had not yet appointed places

me to that of the queen mother.'" During this period Alava represents Catherine as far more eager for the Huguenot alliance and the war against Flanders than King Charles. Alava depicts him as the *povre rey*, with whom Catherine did what she liked, and relates that Phizes, the king's secretary, had expostulated with him on his favouring heresy. Catherine was angry with Phizes, and threatened to have him executed, while Charles, to screen himself, threatened to stab him. The account is in a letter dated November 6, 1571 (Simancas Papers, B. 30). It is strong testimony that up to that period Catherine was more zealous for the admiral than the king. See also State Papers, France, 50, Walsingham's letters.

* Although these benefices had already been given to the Cardinal de Bourbon. Simancas Papers.

† The Venetian envoy Correro bears witness, that the younger brothers of noble families in France having no profession but arms, war was a necessity for them, and of course for the country; and that Spain was the only enemy. Archives of the Medici in Alberi, Life of Catherine de Medicis.

‡ Oct. 1571. Etat de France, sous Charles IX.

CHAP. XXIV.

for the public worship of the Huguenots, and who, by these means, evaded the right granted by the treaty, were enjoined to execute its provisions. Numberless acts of petty tyranny—the exclusion of Protestants from municipal offices, the sequestration of Huguenot orphans, the prevention of their marriage—were to be remedied. And the king promised that the people of La Rochelle should not be molested for the prizes which they had captured from the Spaniards.

Charles exerted himself to raise money and troops for the great enterprise, which, Coligny urged, should be undertaken immediately. No one seemed more eager in the same cause than the queen mother. She and Anjou had received the admiral with great cordiality. She had promised to find the most essential element of the war, money, for the Prince of Orange to commence it. The Duke of Florence was then threatened by the enmity of Spain, suspecting that the coming of Don John of Austria to Italy would be followed by an attack upon Sienna; and it was represented to him by Catherine, that the best way to defeat the designs of Philip in Italy was to give him an insurrection to deal with in the Low Countries. For this purpose the duke promised to deposit 150,000 livres at Frankfort for the use of the Prince of Orange.

The Spanish agents soon informed their master of this plot, and means were taken to assure the Medici of Florence that they were not to be attacked. The promised sum was not deposited at Frankfort, and the expedition for 1571 failed. This was the first cause of quarrel between the queen mother and the admiral, who accused the Duke of Florence of all the delay and disappointment. He brought Belgian emissaries and exiles to the king, who stated that Arras, Valenciennes, and twenty other towns, were ready to rise, if Charles or the Prince of Orange were to invade. Catherine, on

this occasion, made light of their sincerity. She said they were *canaille*, that never kept their promises. The admiral observed that it was the Medici of Florence who had not kept his word. Catherine retorted that money would not be wanting if the Flemings showed themselves in force; that a much greater quantity of money than any loan from Florence could bring would be necessary for such a war, and that it would be found if the affair were well commenced. She would give her own jewels sooner than it should be wanting. The admiral declared that it was such hesitation and coldness as that shown by the queen mother towards the delegates from the Low Countries which always defeated vigorous measures*; that now was the time for action, and that success would be lost if the project were deferred. The king expressed himself of the same opinion. And he lent himself eagerly to raise the money for the payment of the German troops, which the Duke of Florence had not furnished. The admiral proposed to levy several years' revenue from the Church; but this the members of the council, especially Morvilliers and Birague, opposed. The city of Paris, however, promising some 100,000 livres, Catherine herself lent 200,000, Cossé 30,000, and other personages proportionate sums.† But it was too late. The winter approached; the Prince of Orange could not reknit the broken links of his military arrangements; and the expedition against Flanders was put off to the following spring.‡

The king, however, did not relax his exertions to raise money. He employed Marshal Cossé to stir the zeal of Marcel, the provost of the merchants who had

* This scene is related at length by Alava in a letter to Alva, dated Oct. 29, 1571. Simancas Papers, B. 30.

† Simancas Papers, B. 30, letter of November.

‡ For the Prince of Orange's inaction at Frankfort, from total want of money, see his letters, Van Prinsterer, t. iii. p. 447.

CHAP. XXIV.

promised to raise 50,000 livres, "public affairs not having been for a long time so urgent." His secretary having drawn up the letter on this business, Charles took the pen in his own hand, and added "that Cossé should have the pyramid of Gastines taken down, for the time had come when his will must be obeyed."*

This pyramid, with a cross upon it, had been erected on the ruins of the house of a Huguenot merchant named Gastines, rased by order of the Inquisitors' Court, after its owner had been executed. It was near the Halles in view of whatever person or procession entered Paris. By a clause of this treaty, such standing outrages were to be removed; and as the admiral had especially objected to the cross, the king gave orders that it should be removed. The population, however, would not permit the provost to execute the order. It rose in tumult, and drove away the workmen. The Maréchal de Montmorenci came with an armed force, dispersed the mob, hanged one of the ringleaders from an adjoining window, and succeeded in removing the obnoxious memorial.†

Lest the fanaticism of the capital should find a leader, and Duke Henry of Guise become what his father had been through the favour of the Parisians, Catherine now entreated the family of Lorraine to return to court and be reconciled to the admiral. In this recall of the Guises, those who believe in a deep and premeditated design to entrap and sacrifice the Huguenots, find a corroboration of their opinion. They support it

* Charles's letter to Cossé, MS. Bethune, 8702, of Nov. 2, 1571.

† Dec. 8, 1571. The Duc de Montpensier went to the court at Blois, on purpose to protest against the removal of the cross, on which occasion he had high words, not only with Charles, but with Catherine. The conversation, which is curious, is reported by Alava, Simancas Papers. The duke is made to declare, that Catherine alone, and not the king, nor any one else, was responsible for the policy of the time.

by adding the divers hints which Charles gave the Guises of his attachment to them, and of his favour to the admiral being feigned for a purpose. However this may be, the Guises prepared to obey the king's order, and repair to court, but with a large body of armed followers.* As they were coming by Troyes, the king, who feared that they might attack Coligny in his château, offered him a garrison or the power of raising one. Coligny said that, but for the promise he had given his majesty at Blois, he would have gone half way to meet his enemy. It was no easy matter to quiet such rivals and induce them to tolerate each other's presence; and it is to be feared that Charles and Catherine only accomplished this by giving secret promises of favour to both.

The year 1572 now opened, which was to mark the history of France and of Catholicism with the foulest of crimes, and show false Christianity capable of atrocities from which Paganism, in its worst of times and of rulers, would have shrunk. Great doubts exist as to the causes which produced the catastrophe, and as to the share of complicity or influence to be assigned to the planners and orderers of the crime. Had it been long meditated, long prepared by any or by all of the personages who imbrued their hands in that day's deed of blood? Who were its promoters, and who its instruments? And if treachery were premeditated, how far back is it to be dated, and in whose mind was it the constant and fore-concluded thought?

Catholic writers, even those most laudatory of Catherine and her sons, having admitted the truth and adopted the supposition of long premeditation, the Protestants could do no less than accept their avowal. And they represent the plot as hatched with the Duke

* Letters of Admiral to the King, December 13, 1571, in MSS. Bethune. 8702.

CHAP. XXIV.

of Alva at Bayonne, and the peace of St. Germains as granted merely for the purpose of entrapping their chiefs. We know, however, that at Bayonne, though the expediency of cutting off the heads of the Huguenot leaders might have been suggested by some of the ultra Catholic courtiers, Catherine was far from encouraging the idea. It remained nevertheless, as an alternative, contemplated, if not decided. Parties were then so much accustomed to fall with the death of their leader, as had happened in the case of Guise, and occurred the very year in that of the Scottish Regent, that the temptation was strong to get rid of them by any means which offered. Any private scruple derived from religion or morality was but a weak obstruction. To entice such a chief as Coligny to a banquet or tourney, and assail him while thus engaged, was a stroke of policy so obvious that it was talked of, and discussed as a probable and no very heinous crime, long before Charles himself or his mother could have matured such a project.

Princes then, not excepting our own Elizabeth, had always two or more courses of policy, of alliance, and of action chalked out before them; and they were in the habit of changing and inclining from one to the other, as necessity obliged or expediency dictated, without caring much how their character for good faith lost thereby. Catherine and her sons, all and severally, vacillated thus between Spain and England, Catholic and Protestant alliance, ready to persevere in whichever promised the most advantage. For none of them were fanatic religionists. Catherine had been nearly a Protestant, as had been the Cardinal of Lorraine. Anjou had been completely so in his youth. When the Pope withheld the dispensation for his sister Margaret's marriage with the Prince of Navarre, the king threatened to bring Margaret by the hand and have her married *en plein prêche*. These princely amalgams of ferocity

and deceit, produced by the union of the Medicis and the Valois, could not, like Philip II., plead bigotry as an excuse; they were guided solely by the selfishness of the unprincipled politician.

But if bigotry did not actuate the royal family, greed of power was with them a passion equally strong. Catherine had gratified this ruling passion by playing one party of the state against another. But the danger of such a system was losing influence over both. Her sons had fully discerned this, and strove both of them to be foremost by placing themselves at the head of parties which were most active and dominant for the time.

Charles, for the reasons already assigned, was anxious during 1571 to conciliate the Huguenots. And he appears in this not to have been more insincere than the nature of his policy implied. His character was one more given to outbursts of ferocity than the practice of dissimulation. His chief passion was the chase, in which he pursued wild beasts, more with the fury of their species than the excitement of man. He cut off the heads of donkeys, embowelled pigs, and took a pleasure in arranging their entrails butcher-fashion. He introduced Spanish bull-fights into France. When the first account of the victory of Montcontour reached him, the admiral was said to have been taken. Charles instantly wrote to his brother that Gaspard de Coligny and the other heretics should be sent him.* Papyrius Massa's portrait of him harmonises with the idea of his ferocity. "The king was tall, but bent in stature, pale of complexion, eyes menacing and yellow with bile, his nose aquiline, and his neck somewhat awry." † But however sinister his visage, fickle and ferocious his temper,

* MS. Colbert, v. 24, f. 211. The scrawl is as ferocious as the idea which dictated it. It is one of the few autographs of Charles, his letters being more generally those of his mother or his secretaries.

† He may have been here sketched after St. Bartholomew's day, which altered the expression of his countenance for the worse.

CHAP. XXIV.

Charles seems, through 1571, to have been more actuated by the ambition of playing the hero and the conqueror of the Low Countries, by the aid of the Protestants, than meditating what seems to be the needless ferocity of sacrificing the lives of the men whose alliance and support he courted.

But if Charles was sincere, Catherine was misgiving, and Anjou jealous. The queen mother had evidently lost the supreme direction of affairs. She no doubt approved of the peace of St. Germains, and to a certain degree of the accord with Elizabeth*, but she was anxious to observe her one great rule, never to make such concessions for dissolving a Protestant league as must necessarily give rise to a Catholic association and party in the kingdom far more formidable. She was little inclined to Spain, whose monarch had pertinaciously refused either marriage or appanage for her sons, and who threatened the Medici in Florence. But the policy of rushing into a war with Philip the Second and a campaign against Alva, by the aid and counsel of a power so limited and a fortune so seldom prosperous as that of the admiral now appeared to be, called forth her decided opposition.

Many will think, indeed, that she was opposed to Coligny from the first, and that her reception of him at Blois, her cordial sympathy with and promise to him afterwards, up to the quarrel and explanation recorded by Alava, were feigned. So apparently thought Walsingham, the highest of authorities, who wrote as follows, on the 10th of October, to his friend Herbert. Immediate action becoming deferred, "the admiral," wrote Walsingham, "retires to his home with all the appearance of favour from the king and others. I have no doubt of the sincerity of the king, *but I suspect that of the others.* There is some secret tragedy, which I believe will not fail shortly to

* La Mothe.

disclose itself."* I cannot but repeat what was said before; that Catherine and her sons kept the two alternatives before them, and wavered between them, Catherine becoming decidedly hostile to Coligny after their open breach, Charles retaining for a much longer period the hopes, though not the firm resolution, of carrying on the war with Spain and conquering the Low Countries.

Catherine of Medicis was not the only queen whose fickle and feminine nature contributed to defeat the king's schemes for conquering the Low Countries in conjunction with the Protestants. Elizabeth's policy during these critical years of 1571 and 1572 was a tissue of variations. To be sure, her proposed husband was equally fickle. Anjou, the moment he perceived that his brother had seized the position which he had ambitioned for himself, at the head of the Protestants, recoiled, as far as he could without offending Charles, from his marriage with Elizabeth†, and rallied back to reseize that station at the head of the Catholics and the league which the king, after having first disputed with him, had at last abandoned. The duke could not now oppose the marriage of his sister with Navarre, the best means of winning the latter from Coligny and the Huguenots, but he made peace with Guise, and again became the champion of the Church, whose pay he largely received.‡

It thus became necessary, in January 1572, to substitute the name and pretensions of the Duke d'Alençon

* This letter of Walsingham's, translated into Spanish, is in the Simancas Papers, B. 30, of the Archives Impériales. The letter is dated Oct. 10, 1571 and will be found at the end of the present chapter.

† He apparently persevered in it, to please the king, but it was evidently his intention to break it, and he betrayed Elizabeth into doing so. See the letters in S. P. France, 50, 52.

‡ Simancas Papers, B. 29. Alava writes in Feb. 9:—"The Duke of Anjou has returned to his great friendship with Guise, who consents to be reconciled to him, if he will break off the English marriage. Guise, moreover, offers Anjou 100,000 crowns for any enterprise."

CHAP. XXIV.

as a suitor to Elizabeth for that of his brother,— an awkward and difficult task with that princess, who objected to his age, his nullity, and his smallpox.* The Huguenot chiefs and Montmorency strongly recommended him, as did Sir T. Smith, Elizabeth's envoy in Paris. Walsingham wrote in March that the enterprise of Flanders altogether depended on the success of the marriage. Cecil proposed he should pay a visit to England. But whilst the accord between the French court and the Huguenots became completed by the contract of marriage between the King of Navarre and Margaret, a treaty concluded at the same time between France and England was evidently more for form's sake than with any real purpose.† Soon after, Elizabeth demanded Calais, the admiral dissuading her, and seeking to prove that Flushing would be a more valuable acquisition to England.‡ In a word the scheme was not prosperous, nor did the Protestant alliance bear the rich fruit which Charles had been led to expect. Threatened by Spain and Alva at the time, Elizabeth was indeed delighted at the negotiation proceeding with France, which promised her an ally, but she would go no farther than defensive alliance, if either was attacked, and which by no means answered the hopes and purposes of Charles or of Coligny. Schomberg had not been more successful beyond the Rhine; and in the spring of 1572 Charles found himself pressed to enter upon a campaign in Flanders against the Duke of Alva, without any efficient aid or alliance from abroad. His financial resources, too, were more crippled than augmented. The Catholics were prepared to offer passive resistance, and the Guises were in close communication and alliance with Spain. The

* English Council to Walsingham. S. P. France, 53.

† It was merely for mutual defence, writes Charles the Ninth. His letter, Cot. MSS. Ves. f. 6.

‡ For the admiral's share in this negotiation, see the letter of H. Middleton to a Right Honorable, in Cottonian. MSS. ibid.

Parisians murmured. Florence, which Catherine had asked to lend money to the king, had on the contrary sent its contributions to Alva. Rome and the Church, which had contributed so largely to the late campaign against the Huguenots, were now prepared to give what supplies they could afford to the hostile camp.

Jeanne d'Albret, Queen of Navarre, had obeyed the solicitation of the admiral and joined the court at Blois in March, not yet bringing her son with her,—a cause of congratulation when she perceived the extreme laxity of morals which prevailed, the contagion of which her Henry might not escape. The king was cordial: but Catherine, who undertook to negotiate with her, was the reverse; throwing every impediment in the way, and stickling for much that Jeanne could with difficulty be brought to consent to.* The court would have the marriage performed exclusively according to Catholic rites, and in Paris too. Jeanne objected, but could not obstruct by her own scruples a marriage which her party seemed to desire. Her death, which took place early in June, removed whatever delays her persistence might have caused. The Huguenots attributed the event to poison, but the accusation rests on no tenable grounds.

At the same time with Jeanne came to Paris the Cardinal Alexandrini, despatched by the Pope, and empowered by Spain to break off those heretic marriages, and bring back Charles to the terms of the Catholic league. The cardinal had overcome at Madrid some of that pertinacity with which Philip the Second repudiated any further marriage between his family and the Valois. He consented, and the cardinal brought his consent to the marriage of Margaret with the Prince of Portugal. And he, on the same occasion, made splendid offers to Anjou and Alençon. The latter

* Several letters of Jeanne D'Albret to her son, at this time are preserved in MSS. Dupuy, 211.

CHAP. XXIV.

was to be given the command of the Catholic league against the Turk. Charles, who was jealous of the Catholic league, evaded rather than declined the offer. He threatened to make a Huguenot alliance to counterbalance the Catholic league; and he kept his word. Yet he informed the Pope, through the Cardinal Alexandrini, that, notwithstanding the present appearance to the contrary, he would find this policy most favourable to papal interests. His holiness might safely grant the dispensation for the marriage, for he would have ample cause of final satisfaction.

Cardinal D'Ossat has recorded the confession of the Pope himself at a later period, which fully agrees with other assurances given by the king to the Guises in the midst of their apparent disgrace. As far back as the spring of 1571, Charles bade the Cardinal of Guise tell his nephew, the duke, "To be discontented with nothing that he should see or hear, as the king esteemed no man more than he did the duke."* In the following year, when he induced the Guises to come to Paris, and made them become publicly reconciled to the admiral, he warned them to make their reconciliation no deeper than it pleased them, telling the Duc D'Aumale, about the same time, to have patience, and he would soon see a good trick played.† But, perhaps, the strongest indication of foul play being meditated exists in the demand of the king that the fortresses of security accorded for two years to the Huguenots, should be given up to him: a desire which the admiral and his friends readily complied with. These circumstances prove that the desertion of the policy, and the destruction of the persons of the Huguenots, was at least contemplated by the monarch as an alternative, if not a probability, however in better

* Simancas papers quoted by Bouillé, t. ii. p. 494.

† Histoire du Duc de Guise. The same work contains, t. ii. p. 497, a remarkable instance of the deep dissimulation of Charles.

moments he may have shrunk from it. In either case it was expedient to accomplish the marriage of Navarre. This young prince, in case of rupture with the Protestants, being thus in the power of the Catholic court, and unable to resist its mingled threats and solicitations, the Huguenots would lose the future chief whom they looked to, whilst Coligny might be saved or sacrificed. Such were the conflicting opinions, not merely started in private intercourse, but discussed in the regular councils of the state during the spring of 1572. The Duke of Anjou was for not breaking with Spain. Tavannes supported him. Coligny, with his usual energy, maintained the contrary opinion, and pressed Alencon's marriage with Elizabeth, however embarrassed by her exigencies. The king was encouraged in his war projects by the capture of Brill and Flushing, and the insurrection of Rotterdam in April; and Louis of Nassau left Paris on the 19th of May to commence operations. Valenciennes was surprised by his partisans on the 24th, and Mons on the following day. The confederates pressed Charles to lend the aid he had promised, and to order the expedition, prepared at Brouage, near La Rochelle, to sail. The king still hesitated. He, however, furnished Genlis, a follower of Coligny, with money; and allowed him to conduct a large body of volunteers to the support of Mons, which was menaced by Alva. Valenciennes had been already recaptured. But even whilst despatching Genlis, Charles sought to preserve appearances with Spain by a proclamation, forbidding the French gens-d'armes of the northern provinces from taking any part in the war.*

The Duke of Alva directed all his efforts to the recapture of Mons. He had taken, in Valenciennes, papers revealing the projects of France.† His friends

* La Mothe Fenelon, letter of June 9.

† Gachard, Correspondance de Philip II. The letters between

CHAP. XXIV.

at the latter court revealed to him all particulars of the march of Genlis *, so that the duke was able to surprise that partisan near Quievrain, on the 19th of June, disperse his band, and make himself a prisoner.

This event, which augured too ill for the success of any French attempt upon Flanders, struck a chill into the king.† The Prince of Orange passed the Rhine early in July, but with insufficient force, and the Emperor Maximilian, instead of supporting, ordered him to desist. Elizabeth was far from zealous. Her counsellors disliked a French conquest of Flanders; and on the news of the defeat of Genlis, she kept back the English reinforcements intended for Flushing, and, indeed, spoke of recalling those already there.‡ Charles still hesitated. Coligny pressed his demands with the peremptory tone of a master, rather than with the persuasive one of a courtier. He sought less to incite the young king by the promise of glory and success than to intimidate him by the fearful consequences of drawing back, when "troubles more terrible than any that had yet been must assail the kingdom." The admiral spoke almost like an independent potentate. He demanded permission to send 2,000 horse and 4,000 foot to the aid of the Prince of Orange, "which should cost his majesty nothing, and not embroil him with Spain more than he was," for Coligny would take it all on himself. He

the King and St. Goard, his envoy in Spain, attest the anxiety of the former to allay suspicions. King Charles speaks of Alva's having taken Valenciennes, and cut in pieces some Frenchmen, whom he found in it, 'dont je suis très-aise,' writes the monarch, t. ii. p. 269. Letters of St. Goard, MSS. De Harlay Bib. Imp. 228, 2.

* Ludovic of Nassau at this time gave full confidence to Antoine Olivier, who was no other than a Spanish spy, as is evident from the Simancas Papers. They (B. 31) contain a letter of Ludovic to Olivier, dated Paris, Dec. 30, 1571, as well as one from Olivier to the Spanish envoy, Alava, giving information and an account of his movements and plans.

† Letter to Vulcob. MSS. Bethune, 3821, f. 23.

‡ Walsingham's letter of Aug. 10, in Digges. Elizabeth makes a similar accusation against the French Court under same date. S. P. France, 53.

merely required that the government of the frontier provinces should not impede the march of these troops.* Whilst Charles was displeased with this tone of arrogance and independence, he was discouraged by the arguments employed to intimidate him. He was not only menaced by the hostility of Alva and the turbulence of the Huguenots, if disappointed, but the Protestants told him plainly that he would not be able to maintain his own edicts of tolerance were the Duke of Alva to prove triumphant. The Catholic party would then be too strong for him.†

When such was the language of the Huguenots, what must have been that of Catherine, who had for a long time deprecated the attack on Flanders. She asked the king with tears, whether, with the fate of Genlis before him, he would persist in attacking Spain without even the support of England. She entreated him to pause, and at least suspend the sailing of the expedition from Brouage. Charles did pause. He sent (August 10) to beg of Elizabeth to declare war against Spain, and promised to support her views, whatever they might be, upon Flushing.‡ The king was torn by irresolution and the magnitude of the crisis, for it was evident he must break with his mother, his brother, and the Catholics on one side, with the risk of seeing them in arms against him, or he must sacrifice not only his projects upon Flanders but the freedom or life of the admiral to them. They demanded no less. To revolve this alternative Charles betook himself, towards the close of July§, to

* A letter from the Duc de Montpensier to the Count Palatine, written in March 1573, relates the proceedings and demands of the Admiral. MSS. Bethune, 8702.

† Walsingham's letters of July.

‡ But Elizabeth knew that the French envoys held a very different language, and made far different proposals and promises, at Rome and at Vienna.

§ Walsingham writes on the 26th, that the king was on a journey, the Huguenots sending to him as well as to Elizabeth and the German Protestants, entreaties to aid the Prince of Orange.

CHAP. XXIV.

the solitude and distractions of the chase, whilst Coligny repaired to his chateau of Chatillon sur Loing. Catherine seized the opportunity to bring her son to a determination. She hurried after him, found him at Montpipeau, and there with tears and great excitement represented to him once more the perils of the path he was pursuing. If he persisted, she avowed her determination not to share the responsibility, but to withdraw to Auvergne, and there abide the decision of events.* This meant, that if Charles was resolved to risk his crown in a contest with Spain and the Catholics, Catherine would try to secure it and its rights for her other sons. Charles comprehended the threat, yet allowed Catherine to depart without succumbing to it. She had not, however, been long gone than he was impressed with the danger of allowing her to follow up her resolutions. He hastened after his mother, overtook her at Chenonceaux, and the result of renewed conversation there was that Charles became a convert to the views of Catherine, promised her to abandon the war upon Flanders and the policy of the admiral. That he as yet consented to the latter's death is uncertain, but the unfortunate monarch certainly began to contemplate the necessity of the fearful alternative of putting it out of the power of the Huguenots to hurt or resist him now that he had determined to forsake their counsels.

There came little either from events or from abroad to encourage Charles to persevere in his honourable plans, or wean him from the cowardly and wicked counsels of his mother and brother. The Duke of Alva was preparing to besiege Mons, and the Prince of Orange not in force to prevent him. Elizabeth, far

* Le Tocsin. This and other contemporary accounts of the massacre of St. Bartholomew, the *Réveille-matin*, *Capilupi's Stratagema* and *Henry the Third's Narrative to Miron*, are all collected in vol. vii. of the first series of Cimber and Danjou's *Archives curieuses*.

from declaring war against Spain, was withdrawing at once from Flushing and from the proposed marriage with Alençon. Coquetry occupied her more than politics; and, instead of supporting the admiral and the French Huguenot party, she was playing fast and loose with the little Duke of Alençon.*

Amidst this uncertainty arrived the fatal hour for the marriage of the Prince of Condé and the King of Navarre, when the two parties would be in presence, and when it would require all the firmness and determination of the king to keep them from open quarrel. He had compelled them to a kind of apparent reconciliation, and in the incertitude of which way he should eventually turn, Charles bestowed smiles and assurances upon both. He issued an *ordonnance* forbidding arms or opprobrious words, but he took no essential steps to prevent the Guises from bringing numbers of followers with them to Paris. The Prince of Condé's marriage took place at a château near Melun, on the 10th. That of the King of Navarre was fixed for the 18th. When Coligny came to Paris to attend it, as well as to hasten, as he said, the reinforcements for Flanders, the king proposed to him to bring in a regiment of the guard, in order to counteract any attempt on the part of the Guises, which he observed was, notwithstanding their assurance, to be feared. Coligny consented to the specious precaution.

The Huguenot gentry, who now crowded to Paris in the suite of either the admiral or the King of Navarre, were warned that evil awaited them. The Bishop of Valence, who set off about this time for Poland to endeavour to obtain the crown of that kingdom for the Duke of Anjou, bade several of them significantly to "go home." The magistrates of La Rochelle wrote to the admiral that Strozzi, who was in their neighbourhood at the head of the expeditionary fleet

* Her letters and instructions at the critical moment.

CHAP. XXIV.

and army, showed manifestly treacherous intentions. On the other hand, Calvin and Beza pressed him to return to the court, "where all went wrong in his absence," and besought him not to lose the occasion.* Some peasantry of his estate warned the admiral, who replied, prophetically, "that he had rather have his body dragged through the streets of Paris than renew the civil war." In these words spoke the loyal and patriotic gentleman, but not the zealous and determined chief of a new religion. Although Coligny never ceased to press the monarch for the despatch of an army to relieve Mons, which the Duke of Alva held besieged, the cares and festivities of the marriage served as a ready excuse. Charles also pleaded that he had no general whom he could trust. Cossé was avaricious, Tavannes, ambitious; others in the exclusive interest of the Guises. Montmorency appeared the fittest man. The papal dispensation was still not forthcoming, and the Cardinal de Bourbon declined to perform the ceremony without it. Charles, however, practised a deceit upon that prelate by assuring him the dispensation had come. The King of Navarre and the Princess Margaret were accordingly affianced at the Louvre on the 17th August, and on the following day the marriage ceremony was performed at Notre Dame, Navarre and the Huguenots withdrawing during the celebration of the mass. De Thou relates that, entering the choir of the church during the ceremony, he overheard Coligny and the Marechal Damville talking together. The former pointed to the standards taken at Montcontour, which still adorned the church, and observed that he hoped soon to replace them by others won in Flanders more pleasant to behold.

Several days were spent in festivities. One of them was a representation of Paradise, which the king and

* MSS. Bethune, 8702, f. 76. The letter is dated August 5.

his brother defended against Navarre and his friends, the latter being driven at the close of the contest into a gulf of flame designated as the infernal regions. They were liberated after a time. The spectators saw in this a design to mock the Huguenots, and the Maréchal de Montmorenci, not liking the aspect of the court, withdrew to Chantilly.

On the Wednesday there had been a council at the Louvre. When it was over, the admiral accompanied the king to a ball court where he had engaged to play with the Duke of Guise and Téligny. The admiral quitted to return on foot to his hotel, a modest mansion in the Rue Bethizy, not distant.* As he passed, some one presented a letter which he stopped to read; when a shot was fired with an arquebus at him from the ground story of the nearest house, wounding him in the hand and shoulder. The admiral pointed to the window and the house whence the shot came; it was instantly broken open, but the assassin had mounted a horse held ready for him in the street behind, and escaped. Two domestics were however seized, who confessed that the murderer, known afterwards as one Maurevert, had been placed there by a follower of the Duke of Guise.

Coligny led back to his hotel, had his finger amputated by Ambroise Paré, whose scissors ill performed the operation. "Such is the fine reconciliation," exclaimed the admiral, "that the king has guaranteed. It is in God's cause, however, that I suffer these wounds —may He not forget me in His goodness and mercy." When word of the event was brought to Charles, he flung down the *raquette* with which he was playing, and exclaiming, "Shall I never be left at peace?" shut himself up in his apartment. Damville soon after brought word that Coligny desired to see his majesty, whereupon the king after dinner proceeded to the Hotel of

* The house was standing a few years since, and the spot is still marked by the name of Coligny, in the Rue Rivoli.

CHAP. XXIV.

the Rue Bethizy, Catherine and Anjou taking care to accompany him.

When the Duke of Anjou, a few years after, traversed Germany to assume the crown of Poland, he met every where upon his journey such marks of public execration as perfectly to astonish and greatly to disgust him. Rendered sleepless and ill by so just a castigation, which in the Court of France could not have reached him, the prince called up one night his physician, and unbosomed himself of what he stated to be a true account of the massacre of St. Bartholomew.

As in this the unhappy prince does not deny his guilt, and scarcely exculpates, though he strives to excuse himself, what he says on behalf of the king, his brother, is credible. He declared that on several occasions Charles had been so worked upon by the representations and counsels of the admiral that he was on the point of poignarding him, the Duke of Anjou, and regarded his mother with feelings equally hostile. This led them to conspire against the admiral's life, and he admits that it was they who suborned Maurevert to fire upon Coligny.*

When Charles entered the room where the wounded chief lay, and the court remained without, the admiral asked to speak with the king in private, on which the monarch drew close to his bed, and Catherine and Anjou stood apart in the middle of the room. Then no doubt Coligny expressed to the king those truths which De Thou puts into his mouth, of their policy being counteracted and their secrets betrayed to Alva by Catherine and by Anjou, who thus usurped the government and nullified the influence and orders of his majesty. In this manner Genlis had been surprised and defeated. Charles heard without replying, at least aloud, to these complaints of the admiral, but with

* Account of Miron, published in Mathieu, *Histoire de France.*

respect to the attempt to take his life, the king declared he considered the wound to be inflicted on himself, and that he would take such vengeance for it as should not be blotted from the memory of man. Catherine adroitly interfered to interrupt a conversation so menacing, by observing that prolonged speech must be dangerous to the admiral. The royal party then withdrew amidst scowls and threats directed by the Huguenots upon Anjou and his mother. These questioned the king as to what might have been Coligny's secret communication, when he admitted the admiral to have told him that a king in France could never make his power felt and be considered a king, unless he conducted his own affairs, and took care that his authority did not slip from his hands. After this royal visit both parties took council as to the wisest plan to pursue. Amongst the Huguenots the Vidame de Chartres declared that the attempt upon the admiral's life was a plot of the whole court, and would be followed by a massacre of them all; which they could only escape by at once withdrawing from the capital. Téligny replied that they had a good and honest king, whose word it would be injurious to mistrust. Captain Blosset observed that the king was far too good; that for this reason he was suspicious and was resolved to depart.

Catherine de Médicis and the Duke of Anjou felt themselves equally menaced. A judicial prosecution of the assassin of the admiral, or of Guise as his suborner, could not but show the queen and her son as equally guilty, and expose them to the vengeance of the Huguenots. And even short of such extremity, the further adherence of the king to the admiral threatened to deprive them of all power and influence, and consign them to exile.

Charles, returning to the solitude of his palace, remained irresolute. The Huguenots left him to that irresolution and did not intrude. But De Retz, the

CHAP. XXIV.

queen mother's follower, and the Guises, came separately on that evening and during the following morning to exhort the monarch not to desert them after having no doubt given them encouragement and secret support. Had the king in this interval taken any decisive step towards avenging the admiral, prosecuting his assassin, or proceeding to war, the Catholic conspirators would have shrunk abashed. But seeing him remain mute and irresolute, they came to him in a body on the afternoon of Saturday—Catherine, Anjou, De Retz, Tavannes, with the Duke of Nevers, who was the agent of the Papal and Spanish ambassadors.

At this solemn council, De Retz, according to Anjou, recommended the middle course of abandoning the war, and at the same time respecting the admiral. If he did do this, it was probably with the view of enabling Catherine to represent the impossibility of such a course and of the king remaining any longer neutral. The admiral and his friends, she urged, could never be satisfied with less than the prosecution and punishment of those who had attempted to assassinate him. And Guise was not the only person guilty of this, for she, the queen mother, and the Duke of Anjou, had both joined in it, considering it to be for the safety of the crown and state. Could the king abandon his mother and his brother to the vengeance which the Huguenots openly threatened? Nor were these resigned to await his word or sentence, for they had sent to raise *reistres* and a regiment of Swiss, as well as to prepare a general rising in the provinces. The Catholics could not remain tranquil under such prospects. They would arm as the Parisians had indeed already done. And as they could no longer look to the king to command their armies, since his leanings were to the opposite camp, they must choose some other chief.

This last argument had its full weight with the unfortunate monarch, who felt its truth. However he might

disbelieve in the warlike preparations of the Huguenots, to a civil war the present quarrel must come, unless it was at once quenched in the blood of one party or the other. But the Catholics were too numerous, too vigilant, too closely connected with him to be destroyed. Any attempt against the Catholics would arm them, as well as Spain, against him. That very morning the agent of Alva had summoned him to give a categorical answer respecting Genlis and the armament at Brouage. Were it not satisfactory, the Duke of Alva threatened to act.*

Thus pressed by Spain, by his mother, his brother, his generals, such as Tavannes, and by the leaders of the Catholic party, Charles saw the necessity of yielding, and, at the same time, the expediency of something more than acquiescence; of, in fact, going to the other extreme, in order to satisfy the ultra-Catholics of Rome and Spain by his zeal, as well as to put it out of the power of the Huguenots to take vengeance or renew the civil war. Charles therefore burst forth with the expression: "Since you will have the life of the admiral, take it; but, at the same time, you must slay all the Huguenots of France, so that not one may survive to reproach me."

Such was the terrific order of a king of two and twenty, counselled and driven by the Italian demon his mother, and the ruffian soldiers and civilians, of whom she had composed his court and council. Henry, Duke of Guise, summoned immediately, no longer to answer for the assassination of Coligny, but to complete it, accepted the mission of wholesale murder with alacrity and voluptuous delight. Orders had already been given for stationing soldiers of the guard in the house of the admiral and in its vicinity, where his

* Petrucci, the Florentine envoy, states this representation to have been made on August 22. *Medicis Archives*, quoted by Alberi, *Vita di Cath. de Medici.*

CHAP. XXIV.

Huguenot friends had also been advised to lodge. The King of Navarre was, under the same plea of precaution, asked to take up his abode in the Louvre with his friends. The Duke of Guise summoned such bands of the Catholic Swiss, and of the French troops, as he could best rely on. The provost, Marcel, having been removed, his successor, Le Charron, was called on Saturday evening to the Louvre to get his commands from the king himself, Guise being determined not to take all the responsibility. The provost was told that it was the intention of the Huguenots to rise and attack the palace, and that it was necessary to anticipate them. The city magistrate recoiled in horror. But threats made him succumb to the royal order and promise to have the gates shut, and the city-bands prepared to join in what he saw was to be a massacre.*

As soon as it was dark, Catherine descended to the apartments of the king in order to keep him steady, or to incite him to persevere in the resolution he had taken. It was found impossible to make the preparations for the massacre in silence. The Duke of Guise, the bastard D'Angoulême, and other chiefs, were obliged to hurry to different rendezvous. The soldiers congregated at the Louvre, and lit torches as for a fête. Some Huguenot gentlemen, surprised, went to ask the reason of such a concourse. They received at first evasive answers, then insults. At last a Guisard soldier struck one of them with his partisan. The queen, learning this, declared that it would be dangerous to await the appointed hour. And she gave orders that the bell of St. Germain l'Auxerrois should at once knell forth the signal of the massacre.

It was before daylight on Sunday, the 24th of August, 1572. On hearing the signal, the Duke of

* Régistres de l'Hôtel de Ville.

Guise, with his brother, the Duke D'Aumale, the bastard of Angoulême, and a chosen band of assassins, proceeded to the hotel of the admiral. Cosseins, with a company of the king's guard, had been stationed within it. He opened the doors, and was the first to slay a follower of the admiral's. Some of the suite barricaded themselves in the inside; but the guard, led by Cosseins, soon forced their way upstairs. The admiral, not doubtful of the fate that awaited him, had already uttered his last prayer with the pastor Merlin. Aware there was no escape for him, he bade his followers save themselves as best they might, whilst he himself opened the doors to his assassins. A man called Boëme, or the Bohemian, who had been a servant of Guise, was the foremost. Advancing with an *estocq*, he first asked which was the admiral. Coligny saying that he was, Boëme drove the weapon into his body, and then battered his head with it. This was scarcely done when the impatient voice of Guise was heard from below, asking Boëme had he finished? Boëme replied he had. "Throw me down the body, that we may make sure!" It was done as ordered, and the lifeless body of the victim fell at the feet of Guise. Blood so covered the face as to render it irrecognisable. Guise stooped down, and, wiping it with his handerchief, exclaimed, "That's he!" then, giving a contemptuous kick to the body, departed to order the despatch of other victims. The house of the admiral was given up to pillage, his papers alone being brought to the Louvre.* The remains, after having been dragged about the streets, were put over a fire to blacken, and then hung by the feet to the gibbet of Montfaucon, where Charles

* One of the motives for slaying the admiral was, no doubt, to destroy those papers which proved Catherine and the king's active co-operation with the designs upon the Low Countries, and which, if betrayed to Spain, would indispose Philip the Second to the French Court. Coligny's memoirs were amongst the papers found. De Retz burned them, for very obvious reasons, in the presence of Charles.

CHAP. XXIV.

himself, after some days, coming to visit it, declared the odour of a dead enemy sweet.

Those of the admiral's friends who lodged near the hotel, were despatched with an equal ease. The Count de la Rochefoucauld, who had been with the king till a late hour, thought those who burst into his lodging came on some playful errand. Charles was accustomed to have his friends and courtiers flogged *, as a joke, after they retired to rest. La Rochefoucauld opened the door to his assassins, who instantly despatched him. Those conspirators who first met Téligny were unwilling to murder one so beloved, and one who was the chief cause of the Huguenots trusting Charles. But a follower of the Duke of Anjou shot him. Soubise was killed at the door of the Louvre. There had been some scandalous reports about him, which so incited the curiosity of Catherine and her ladies, that they descended with savage indecency to inspect the body. The Marquis of Resnel was killed by his cousin Bussy. The murderers generally demanded as a right, and obtained, the places and dignities of their victims. A lady called La Chataigneraye was in hopes of inheriting the family property by the murder of her two brothers, who were Huguenots. One escaped, greatly to her mortification, and notwithstanding her having betrayed his escape and lurking places to the assassins. Youth was no claim to mercy. The Marquis of Conty, a boy, was butchered in the arms of his tutor, M. De Brion, who tried to save him. One of the horrors of the massacre was, indeed, not only the cruelty of adults to infants, but the barbarities that children were taught and allowed to practise on each other. A Huguenot baby in a cradle was dragged through the streets by orthodox boys of ten, and finally strangled, whilst smiling at its precocious assassins, who flung it into

* This pastime Charles sometimes extended to *females*. Mlle. de Nantouillet was so treated, if one is to believe the MSS. Dupuys, 661.

the river. Caumont, Marquis de la Force, was sleeping in a room with his two sons, when surprised and slain with one of them. The other contrived to feign death, and lie hidden beneath the bodies of his father and brother, till saved by one more humane than his companions amongst the band of murderers. A gentleman, named Taverni, was the only Huguenot who defended himself in his lodging, and slew several of his assailants before he perished.

Within the Louvre, the followers of the King of Navarre were even more defenceless than those who were near the admiral. They were led like so many sheep down to the inner court, and massacred. Charles, his brother, and the queen mother, who moved from window to window, not to lose a sight of a single murder, was apostrophised by one of the victims to keep his word of surety given to them. Anjou coolly looked on while Piles, who had so gallantly defended St. Jean D'Angely against him, was slain.

In other quarters the work of blood was almost as active as around the Louvre. Certain companies of the city force, led by the butcher Pezou and some of those kindred spirits which Paris has so frequently produced, spared none suspected of being Huguenots, several Catholics being slain by mistake. Other companies sent their Protestant fellow-citizens prisoners to the Hotel de Ville, where they remained till the more ferocious butchers returned, and flung them into the river. The Faubourg St. Germain alone enjoyed an exemption from slaughter. Marcel, the ex-provost, charged with the executions in that quarter, was not sufficiently active. The first thought of the Huguenots there, when aroused and informed of the tumult, was to hasten to the support of the king, whom they considered to be threatened. They were received by an arquebusade. And it is upon them that Charles is represented to have fired several shots, with his own

CHAP. XXIV.

hand, from a window of the Louvre. Two or three English perished; but the greater number, amongst whom was Philip Sidney, took refuge in the Hôtel of Walsingham, where they were protected by the Duke of Nevers.

Guise and his brother Aumale were furious on learning that the Huguenots of the Faubourg St. Germain had not been included in the massacre. The Vidame de Chartres, Montgomery, and others were amongst them, well fitted to lead a party to vengeance. They rushed to the Faubourg and experienced some further delay in opening the gates, for the Faubourg was closed. This allowed time to the Vidame and his friends to escape. Guise and his mounted partisans followed them for miles with vain hope of completing their list of murders.

The king was, during the whole night and morning, in a frenzy of excitement. The words of carnage which Tavannes went roaring through the streets, of *Kill, kill,* were repeated in the palace by the unfortunate king, and obeyed with no less alacrity. It had been proposed to slay the King of Navarre and the Prince of Condé; and the Duchess of Lorraine was with difficulty persuaded by her mother, Catherine, to allow the Queen of Navarre to retire for the night. She feared what might happen in a scene of indiscriminate slaughter. Catherine, however, bade Margaret join her husband whatever might happen.

According to the memoirs of this princess, the King of Navarre was far less tranquil than the admiral; he and forty of his friends passing the night in her chamber talking aloud of the attempt on the admiral, and of their determination to demand the next morning of the king the arrest and trial of the Duke of Guise. The Catholics and the king were beforehand, and the massacre had begun when the King of Navarre and the Prince of Condé were summoned to the king's pre-

sence. The *mass* or *death* was the alternative which he vociferated to them, and as they hesitated, he threatened to cut off their heads in three days if they did not submit.

The Queen of Navarre remained in bed, when a Huguenot gentleman, escaping from the massacre, wounded in two places, burst into the room, flung himself on the bed, and, seizing the queen's hand, entreated her to save him. The archers of the guard entering to despatch their victim, the queen begged his life of their captain, who, laughing at the scene, in which the wounded gentleman covered Margaret of Navarre with his blood, granted M. de Lerac his life. When the queen then proceeded to leave the room for the apartment of her sister, another Huguenot was slain at her feet. The archers of the guard were ready executioners.

The scenes of blood were not over in a day. If the soldiers and the nobles who had visited Paris on the royal invitation were massacred at the first, the learned and retiring victims were sought out subsequently. La Place, the historian, who was a judge; De Beauvoir, governor of the King of Navarre; Ramus, the celebrated professor, were amongst the later victims. Ramus was tracked and pointed out to the assassins by an envious professor, his rival. Charles issued orders to the civic authorities to stop pillage. But as to murder, he listened with a smile of approbation and complacency to the butcher Pezou when the latter boasted that he had thrown 120 Huguenots into the river the day before, and reserved as many for that evening. Charles took delight in contemplating the 4,000 bodies which, Brantome says, floated down the Seine.

Letters were, nevertheless, written by the secretaries of state and signed by Charles, on the very day of the massacre, representing it as the result of a quarrel

CHAP. XXIV.

between the partisans of Guise and those of the admiral, the latter seeking to avenge the attack upon Coligny.* The Duke of Anjou wrote in the same sense on the following day†, when Charles had already adopted another version, and spoke no longer of a fortuitous rencontre, but of a conspiracy of the Huguenots. The monarch says, indeed, with great *naïveté*, that they "began to discover (the day after the massacre) the conspiracy of the Huguenots against himself."‡ The date and the confession show that the court had merely begun to invent this plea. The Duke of Guise refused to bear the blame of the massacre, for which he had received the orders of the king, and the latter thought it best to take advantage of the act, as one of premeditated and determined policy, with Spain, Rome, and the Catholic party in general. On the 26th he proceeded to Parliament, and openly avowed, "his countenance betraying the conflict of his soul," that it was by his commands the executions had taken place, in order to anticipate the plots of Coligny and the Huguenots, and that he took the whole responsibility upon himself.§ The First President, Christophe de Thou, who has left some fine and indignant verses on St. Bartholomew's Day, belied them so far as to compare the king to Hercules, who had rid the world of monsters. He, moreover, uttered the apothegm that he who knew not how to dissemble, knew not how to reign.‖

* Letter of Charles to La Mothe Fenelon, t. vii. p. 323. A similar account was sent to the governors of provinces. Letter to the governor of Burgundy, printed in Fontanieu, 324.

† His letters to Matignon on the 25th. MSS. Bethune, 8702.

‡ La Mothe Fenelon, Cor. t. vii. p. 325.

§ Petrucci's despatch in Alberi. It was imperative indeed upon the king to avow his complicity in the act. Montmorency was prepared to rise and avenge it, had the king not come forward. Memoirs of Duplessis-Mornay.

‖ The massacre of St. Bartholomew also inspired the ex-chancellor with poetic indignation. Yet we find a letter of his in the following year to Catherine de Medicis, begging a place of secretary for his son. MSS. Colbert. Fontanieu, 329–330.

Never were the opinions of Europe more completely divided than in the judgment of cotemporaries respecting the massacre of 1572. Spain and Italy were in adoration and jubilee, Philip the Second in ecstasies. Charles the Ninth appeared to him the greatest of monarchs. At Rome, where his conduct was announced by the Cardinal of Lorraine to be the result of the longest premeditation and the deepest deceit, the news was welcomed as a glorious victory.* A Te Deum was sung as well as a Mass of Thanks, and the cannon of St. Angelo was fired in honour of the deed. Gregory ordered a medal to be struck in its commemoration, with his own head on one side, and the exterminating angel on the other†; whilst a picture representing the massacre, ordered of Vasari, was suspended in the Sistine chapel.

Whilst the south thus displayed the system of morals that pure sacerdotalism had instilled, the entire north, Catholic as well as Protestant, protested against such an utter perversion of both religion and right. Even the Emperor Maximilian wept for his son-in-law. The council of England expressed itself in terms of honest indignation, and offered Charles support if he wished to take vengeance on the murderers. The court of France itself wavered for a time between Italian applause and German execration. But an eminent portion of the French noblesse protested against the sacerdotal and Italian ruffianry of Catherine and her vile progeny. Even these were obliged to blush and falter, and seek, at last, to conceal and extenuate their crimes. Despatches from Paris came to warn the Cardinal of Lorraine that he must cease to represent the massacre as an act to be gloried in. And when the Pope, persisting in his adoration of wholesale murder, sent a legate to congratulate Charles upon it, he was

* Letter of Cardinal. MSS. Dupuy, 755, f. 89.

† Description in Fontanieu, 324.

CHAP. XXIV.

not only coldly received by the queen mother, but shocked and astonished to find that public opinion in France condemned such acts. In one respect, also, the Papal court displayed some shame. The head of Coligny had been cut off by some of the zealous murderers, and sent to Rome as the head of a rebellious pacha was sent to be hung on the gate of the Seraglio. Rome remained silent as to the precious gift, which it received, no doubt, in secret exultation. Philip showed his admiration by pensioning the murderer Boëmé at the request of his accomplice Guise.*

The Cardinal of Lorraine, in his reply from Rome on the 10th September, congratulated the king not only on the massacre in Paris, but on its being repeated through the principal towns in the kingdom. He must have written with a knowledge of the intention of the court rather than of the event. Catherine indeed had, on the very first day, given the signal for massacre at Meaux, where the Huguenots, crammed into prisons, were brought out one by one and slaughtered, a complete precedent for the revolutionists of 1792. The same course was pursued at Troyes† and Bourges. At Orleans a thousand Huguenots were thrown into the river. At Lyons they allowed themselves to be shut up in different buildings and prisons, under promise of protection from the governor. Orders came down from the court that none should be spared: the executioners, however, refused to perform the office, as did the soldiers of the garrison. But 300 of the Catholic citizens undertook the work of slaughter. The enormity of the holocaust prevented the example from being followed, for the thousands of bodies floating down the river so shocked and even terrified the inhabitants of Arles and the other towns on the Rhone, that they refrained from drinking of its water. At Toulouse and

* Philip sent him 6000 crowns. Petrucci's despatch in Alberi.

† MSS. Dupuy, 333.

Angers the Huguenots were also massacred. At Rouen the governor tried long to save those whom he had confined, but the orders of the court let loose the murderers. At Bordeaux, the governor long hesitated to accomplish the crime which the court claimed from him. But at last, in October, he allowed the *bonnets rouges*, as the patriots were called, to have their full sway in the town, and some hundreds of Huguenots were slaughtered. The towns of the east suffered little; they were not populous, and the Duke of Guise would not shock the German Protestants by murders too near them. Guise, however, summoned the gentry, and gave them the choice of mass or exile. The great nobles, indeed, who governed provinces, with the exception of the Duke of Montpensier, employed their authority to stay the massacre. And that duke, notwithstanding his efforts, was unable to induce the Bretons to murder their fellow countrymen. The Count of Tende, Saint Hérem in Auvergne, alike refused to order or permit these cold-blooded murders, and the Vicomte d'Orthes at Bayonne returned for answer, that he had consulted the inhabitants and soldiers as to the execution of the court order, but could not find any willing to become assassins. He therefore begged the king to command their services in things that were possible.*

The Protestants, flying from the different provinces, took refuge in England, in Germany, or in Switzerland. Those of the South in Bearn, or the Cevennes, those of Poitou and Xaintonge in La Rochelle, whilst the fugitives from Paris and the Isle of France betook themselves to Sancerre.† Many who could not escape, feigned conversion, so overwhelming was the panic.

* The authenticity of this letter given in D'Aubigné, has been called in question, on the ground that D'Orthes was cruel. There is a letter from Bearn to Villars, dated 1573, in Fontanieu, 329–330, in which Orthes' government is, on the contrary, described as mild; that in consequence the Bearnais had risen, and that the court must yield.

† La Popelinière.

CHAP. XXIV.

One of those who recanted was Sureau, a pastor of Orleans, who was employed to convert others, and especially the Prince of Condé. The King of Navarre also yielded to the threats of the court, besought pardon of the Pope in a letter, in which he frankly attributed his conversion to the severe admonitions of his mother-in-law, Catherine! He also sent an edict to the people of Bearn ordering them to return to the Catholic religion.

The court flattered itself that it could succeed by terror in forcing the Huguenots into the Catholic fold. It sought to keep the terror alive, and at the same time excuse itself to the Queen of England and the Protestants of Germany, by imputing a conspiracy and a design to murder the king to the admiral and his co-religionists. To support this tale, invented, as we have seen, two days after the massacre, not only was the admiral's memory subjected to trial, but two of his aged friends and followers, Briquemaut and Cavagnes, were arraigned before parliament, solemnly accused, and as solemnly condemned for a crime, which all knew perfectly to be a mere pretence. These aged counsellors had been the envoys and agents for the Huguenots to the court, from which they had received full assurance and information respecting the projected Flemish war. They were executed for the same reason that the admiral's papers were burnt, to keep concealed from Spain the designs of Catherine and Charles against it. They were hanged by torchlight, the king not only being present, but approaching near to witness it.

All this time Catherine had the audacity to press the marriage of her son Alençon with Elizabeth, and that queen had the cold and cowardly hypocrisy to bandy compliments and affect friendship with the French court, deeply stained as were its hands with blood. The English council, however, expressed fully its abhorrence of the crime of St. Bartholomew, and Walsingham did not disguise his reprobation. "We may treat Protes-

tants in France with the same severity as your queen has treated the Catholics," said Catherine. "Her majesty," replied Walsingham, "never deceived the English Catholics by promising favour and protection, in order to punish them as the Huguenots have been treated here." Catherine showed the English envoy a paper found after the admiral's death, in which Coligny warned the king against English ambition and designs in Flanders. "There is your friend," said Catherine. "This at least proves the admiral to have been a true friend of France," replied the ambassador.

The executions in the capital, and massacres in the provinces, had an effect the reverse of that contemplated by Catherine. It compelled them to resistance. Sancerre rose a few days after the execution of Briquemaut, and drove out the king's officers. Montauban and Nevers followed the example. La Rochelle was the chief bulwark of the Huguenots, open to communication with Montgomery and the chiefs who had escaped to England.* Strozzi had failed to make himself master of it at the critical moment, and subsequent attempts to cajole the citizens were vain, they being fully warned by the massacre of Castres, and later by that of Bordeaux, of the fate that awaited them, if they admitted the troops and officers of the king. The only Huguenots whom Charles spared were his nurse, his physician, Paré, and La Noue: the latter was sent to France by Alva after the surrender of Mons, and the Duc de Longueville brought him to court. Charles thought him likely to be useful, and restored him the property of his brother-in-law, Téligny, on the condition of his proceeding to La Rochelle, and labouring to persuade the citizens to submit. La Noue, at first ill

* Elizabeth promised frequently not to aid Montgomery, but refused to give him up or persecute him, The aid which he received was collected in a great measure from private contribution. La Mothe Fenelon.

CHAP. XXIV.

received, became at a later period its commander. Little power, however, was entrusted to him. In a general assembly of the Huguenots at Réalmont, a republican spirit manifested itself in the absence of any prince. And whilst some towns, says La Popelinière, remained under the guidance of the local noblesse, La Rochelle, Sancerre, Montauban, and many other places of Gascony, Quercy, and Languedoc, would obey none but their own mayors and counsellors. The pastors who had taken refuge in La Rochelle, planned the form of a confederation, and appointed a council of one hundred members, consisting of delegates, partly from other towns, there being no distinction between noble and citizens in the choice of these counsellors. The great question being that of peace or war, an assembly of the whole population was held in order to decide it, the noblesse within the town showing themselves indignant at their subjection to the pastors and the people. They were continually holding parley with the enemy and seeking to treat; to stop which, the Rochellois passed an order that negotiations should only be carried on by writing.

Invested in November, La Rochelle was formally besieged in February 1573 by the Duke of Anjou. He soon complained that the 10,000 infantry promised were but 6000; that the artillery was in a wretched state; and that money was indispensable.* The court, neglecting the other provinces, such as Provence and Languedoc, concentrated all its resources before La Rochelle,† against which the besiegers succeeded in sinking a carrick and erecting batteries at the river's mouth. The noblesse, on this, declared the impossibility of further defence, La Noue corroborating the opinion. But

* Letter of Duc de Nevers, for Anjou, from La Rochelle, copied in MSS. Fontanieu, 329. Walsingham's letter of Feb. 28, 1573, in S. P. France, 54.

† Charles's letter to Damville. MSS. Bethune, 8754.

CHAP. XXIV.

the citizens, animated by their pastors, would not hear of surrender, and resolutely manned the breach against the never-ceasing assaults which the Duke of Anjou and the young nobles led.* In one of these the Duc D'Aumale, one of those present at the murder of Coligny, was shot. Cosseins, the captain of the guard who betrayed the admiral, also fell.* Montgomeri at last appeared with a fleet from England; he was unable to penetrate into the harbour, but contrived to send in funds and provisions. The town was thus in a position to hold out till the attention and prospects of the court and of the Duke of Anjou were diverted from it.†

With a restless desire to procure a crown for her son, without considering whether such honour was tenable or advantageous, Catherine had contrived to carry the election of the Duke of Anjou to the throne of Poland. A dwarf of that country, long resident at the French court, had, on his return, been loud in the praises of the victor of Montcontour. The race of the Jagellons, who had so long worn the crown of Poland, was then well nigh extinct. And in abhorrence of being ruled by German princes, especially by those of Austria, who had also acquired Bohemia and Hungary, the Poles looked for some prince endowed with capacity and resources to defeat such a consummation. The Poles thought they had found such a one in the Duke of Anjou, whose claim Montluc, Bishop of Valence, had gone to support. The result was the election of the prince in May 1573.‡

The Polish deputation charged with the brilliant offer was on its way to Paris, and the court was unwilling it should behold the spectacle of civil war, as well as of the Duke of Anjou unsuccessful. The siege of

* La Rochelle, où nos principaux tueurs ont été tués. Pasquier's Lettres.

† Journal du Siege de la Rochelle. MSS. De Mesmes, N. 2, 8677.

‡ MSS. Fontanieu, 327–8.

CHAP. XXIV.

Rochelle had been attended with great loss*; it was calculated, that of the Catholics as many perished before it as their antagonists had lost in the late massacre. D'Anjou, as well as some of his officers, was wounded. The King of Navarre, who had been brought to the siege, was moved by its ill success to look towards his old co-religionists; and even the Duke D'Alençon, Catherine's youngest son, who had a fierce quarrel with his brother, Anjou, began to display the same leanings.

Both sides, therefore, being anxious for peace, the Rochellois, sorely pinched by famine, and having supported themselves for some time on mussels, it was agreed, in the end of June, that there should be a cessation of hostilities; that the gentry of the Huguenot persuasion should enjoy their own worship in their houses, and citizens the same. And publicly the inhabitants of La Rochelle, Montauban, and Nismes should enjoy freedom of worship, as far as *prêche*, baptism, and marriage went, but not the communion. No other town was mentioned, not even Sancerre, then closely besieged, and suffering such extremity of famine, that the inhabitants had eaten their shoes and books. This was not what the pastors of La Rochelle promised, and had insisted on.†

But the peace was merely concluded by the court to last till after the departure of the Polish deputation, and the Protestants of all the towns and provinces not included soon met to protest and reject it. They had assembled in August 1573 to demand the complement of religious toleration withheld from them, levying

* Three hundred captains, says Tavannes, four *maîtres de camp*, and one priest.

† Mémoires de l'État de France. La Popelinière. Schomberg, who was in Germany, seeking to pacify the Protestant princes, was bidden by the Elector Palatine to demand the restoration of the children of Coligny to their property. Catherine and Charles both refused. Catherine's letter of April, 1573, from Blois, to Schomberg. MSS. Colbert, 29.

forces and supplies to maintain their demands if requisite by arms. The several estates of the southern provinces formed a kind of union, and drew up a body of remonstrance to the king. Of this, religion formed not the sole, or even the prominent grievance. The chief complaints were the enormous weight and increase of taxation. The tallage of Languedoc, they alleged, had been doubled since Louis the Eleventh's time. The people were thus reduced to skeletons, and the tiers-état must insist that peace and concord at any price should be restored to the kingdom. The queen mother was shocked at the boldness with which the deputies of Languedoc pressed these truths, and exclaimed: "If the Prince of Condé were in the midst of France with 20,000 horse and 50,000 foot, he would not demand the half of what they asked."

The Languedociens cared little for the queen mother's astonishment. On the return of the deputies, they persisted in their purpose. The Maréchal Damville, of the house of Montmorency, governor of the province, favoured them underhand, granted them a suspension of arms, and quietly looked on while the southerns laid the basis of a large federation, with its states-general, its finance, and its executive. Whilst the religious and political malcontents of the kingdom were thus organising and collecting forces, the Duke of Anjou, whom Catherine had previously given as a chief and a commander to the Catholics, took his departure for Poland. He showed considerable reluctance to leave, seeing that the king's health visibly declined. But Charles was feverishly anxious that his brother should leave. He hastened, almost ordered, his departure from the Louvre, and conducted him to the frontier in December.

Charles was thereby not freed from his anxieties, although the object of them was changed. In the

* La Popelinière, tom. ii. p. 189. Etat de France.

CHAP. XXIV.

absence of the Duke of Anjou, his brother Alençon started up more restless, if possible, and ambitious, and tempted to commence an antagonism to the king more dangerous than even that of Anjou.* Alençon had not imbrued his hands in the blood of St. Bartholomew's day. No precedent prevented him from declaring himself the chief of that semi-political, semi-religious opposition which had organised itself in the south and west. The king of Navarre, his fellow-prisoner at court, necessarily shared his discontent; and when both prisoners meditated their escape, they found abettors and friends in the Maréchal de Montmorenci, the enemy of Catherine since the massacre, and in the Maréchal Cossé, equally disgusted with the cruelty and treachery of the court.

A more powerful mind than either had entered this plot, and hoped by its means not only to take vengeance for the night of St. Bartholomew, but to reverse the bigot Spanish policy which had prevailed in France since that catastrophe. This personage was no other than Cecil. Our State Papers† contain a letter of his addressed to Walsingham in March 1574, in which he undisguisedly points out the necessity of securing the succession to the French throne, on the impending death of Charles, to Alençon instead of Anjou, the English minister sending money at the same time for the purpose of corrupting the royal guards. Not aware, at first, of the extent to which the ground beneath her feet was mined, Catherine summoned an assembly of notables from the different provinces, to meet at St. Germains. She could not hope to face the

* In MSS. Dupuy, 211, is a letter of Catherine, dated 23rd of November, 1573, mentioning Alençon's desire to join the war in Flanders, as well as to marry a Spanish princess.

† The State Papers, France, 57, contain not only the important letter of Burleigh to Walsingham, but the same, France, 58, have a letter from Catherine to Elizabeth, dated July 10, reproaching her with the treacherous conduct of her envoys, which she fully details.

threatened insurrection of the Protestants without resources and supplies which the Catholics alone could provide. Yet she shrank from again putting her family and fortunes in the power of the Guises, and all her efforts were directed to negotiations and to gaining time till the Duke of Anjou could return from Poland. As to the poor king, he was completely prostrated, his letters breathing hesitation and fear. They are those of a trembling culprit rather than of a ferocious executioner.*

The king and Catherine had, indeed, counter-plotted and had failed. The queen laid a scheme by which Biron was to make himself master of La Rochelle, and thus defeat the machinations of the Protestants by depriving them of their stronghold. The scheme was discovered, its accomplices amidst the citizens of La Rochelle sent to the scaffold, and the Huguenots rendered more excited and determined to take up arms against the court. They only awaited their promised leader, no other than the Duke of Alençon, who was to be declared lieutenant-governor of the kingdom. He had agreed to make his escape from St. Germains with the King of Navarre, when Guitry should bring a body of horse to protect their retreat. They were to find, in Champagne, an army of Protestants under Louis of Nassau. Cecil's agent, Dale, was privy to the scheme. On the point of execution, Guitry approached St. Germains with no sufficient body of troops, ere the princes were aware. This alarmed Alençon, instead of communicating to him ready courage and quick resolution. His hesitation became panic in one of his followers, La Mole, who, fearing failure, and his own consequent ruin, sought to save himself by divulging all to Catherine. The plot was arranged for Easter Sunday, 1574. The prince was to escape on the Satur-

* Fontanieu, 330.

CHAP. XXIV.

day. Catherine caused Alençon and his followers to be arrested on the Friday, and hurried off the court from St. Germains, first to the Tuileries and then to the Castle of Vincennes.

Charles was at the time severely indisposed. Blood came in quantities from his chest, which the physicians attributed to his over-fatigue at the chase, and over-exertion in blowing the horn. Such symptoms were not in him unaccompanied by remorse, and he showed, on more than one occasion, disgust against those who had compelled him to the massacre. Critical as were the times, Charles had dismissed the Duke of Guise with harsh words, to which the duke replied by saying that "his Majesty would soon want him." Charles would gladly, perhaps, have given Alençon the post of lieutenant-general that he demanded. But Catherine, who foresaw the king's approaching end, would have no one, not even a son, endowed with such power at such a crisis. As Charles was brought in a litter to Vincennes he was heard to exclaim, "Could they not have waited till after my death?"

The Marshals Montmorency and Cossé, induced by bland messages to repair to Vincennes, were put under close arrest. Their relatives, Thoré and Meru, with the Prince of Condé, Turenne, and Montague, escaped. Alençon's capture did not prevent the rising. La Noue, issuing from La Rochelle, took possession of town after town in Poitou, whilst Montgomery, landing on the coast of Normandy, reduced those of the Cotentin. Catherine, sending Maréchal Matignon against Montgomery, and the Duke of Montpensier against La Noue, brought La Mole and Coconas, the confidants of the Duke of Alençon, to trial. The latter was a Piedmontese, who had boasted of the number he had slain during the massacre. La Mole had been the bearer of sanguinary orders to the provinces. Notwithstanding the baseness with which they confessed everything and

inculpated their master as well as the Montmorencies, they were executed on the 30th of April.* Alençon humiliated himself and promised repentance to his mother, who feared all the time that he was on his knees before her, that he meditated her assassination.† The defence of the King of Navarre is preserved, as it was written by his wife, who, with the cleverness of her family, drew up this statement of his wrongs.‡ CHAP. XXIV.

But the active care and vengeance of the queen mother were necessarily suspended by the sinking health of the king. He had ever since the night of St. Bartholomew been subject to sudden awakenings, followed by groans and suffering. Rumour said that blood ran from his pores. Seven days before his death he is reported to have called for his brother, Henry of Navarre, who came in much alarm, but was received with affectionate welcome from Charles, who recommended him his wife and child, and told him to trust nobody. Charles was tended in his last moments by the Huguenot woman who had been his nurse. "Ah! my dear nurse," exclaimed the monarch, "what blood and what murders. Ah! what a wretched counsel, Pardon and have mercy, O my God! I know not where I am, these thoughts so perplex and agitate me. What is to come of all this, and what of myself? I am lost I well know." "The murders be on the heads of those who counselled thee," exclaimed the nurse, as she changed the dying monarch's handkerchief wet with tears.

Catherine came to inform him of the success of his arms, and of the capture of Montgomery in Domfront. The king turned away in indifference. He, however,

* Procès of La Mole and Coconas.

† Duc de Nevers.

‡ Memoirs of Margaret de Navarre. Margaret is supposed to have had another interest in pleading, which was, that La Mole was her lover. His head was said to have been brought her to embalm, as was that of Coconas to the Duchess of Nevers.

CHAP. XXIV.

signed an ordonnance conferring the Regency upon his mother during his own illness, and until the return of his brother from Poland. Charles expired on the 30th of May 1574. Besides the daughter which the queen bore to him, he left a son, by Marie Touchet, who was afterwards the Duc d'Angoulême.*

* The following are the principal passages of the letter in the Simancas Papers, B. 30, 124, entitled, Decifrada de Walsingham a Mos. de Herbert, da Bles (Blois) x. de Ottobre, 1571—intercepta da Bles.

"At all events, you know by experience how very difficult it is to treat with this nation, on account of its court being so corrupted, and the impossibility of things passing secretly. I have no hope that the cause will have any good result, there being so much dilatoriness here. Since the king's departure, they have grown colder every day. French offers should be seized and acted on at once, instead of which our tardiness and reluctance to conclude a close and firm alliance cools their desire for such. Notwithstanding the promises of the king to the admiral for the execution of the articles of the edict, I doubt the accomplishment. The king is too much given to his pleasures to reform a state in such disorder. As long as the triumvirate continues, there can be no reform, nor is any good to be hoped, until this state be reduced to an entire monarchy, with the power of the king absolute! The admiral has withdrawn to his country house with the full appearance of the king's favour and that of the others. I entertain no doubt of the sincerity of the king, but I suspect that of the others. And if there be secret treason, it will not be long in disclosing itself." The signature is given in Spanish, "Vostro muy assegurado hermano, Vualsingham."

CHAP. XXV.

HENRY THE THIRD.

1574—1589.

CATHERINE of Medicis had thus once more the plenitude of power in her hands until the return of the son whom she loved best. She did not want vigour, and showed it by ordering the levy of 6,000 *reistres*, and of as many Swiss, demanding of the court of Rome permission to sell 200,000 livres of French ecclesiastical revenue.* Thinking these resources more advantageously employed by the new king on his return, she concluded a two months' truce with the Huguenots, and with those Catholics who, in alliance with them, held an independent position in the south.†

The difficulty of governing and pacifying the kingdom had indeed enormously increased since the massacre—a just judgment upon its perpetrators. Previous to it, the crown had but to contend with the zealous Huguenots and the intolerant Catholics, their antagonists. That great outrage upon morals, upon religion, and upon individual security, had created a third party, subsequently called the *Politiques*, consisting of Catholics, who were not fanatic, who did not think it a duty to imbrue their hands in the blood of their fellow-countrymen of a different creed, and who had conceived a pro-

* Letter of Catherine, July 26.

† Davila, De Thou, D'Aubigné, Mathieu, La Popelinière, continue the chief sources, to which are now added the Journal de L'Estoile, the collection of papers in the Mémoires de Nevers, those of the *Ligue*, the Mémoires de Cheverny and Villeroy.

CHAP. XXV.

found aversion for a court and government guided by Italian counsellors on Machiavellian principles. The Montmorency family formed the nucleus of this honourable party, the chief of which had gone far enough to have been included, but for his timely escape, in the massacre of St. Bartholomew. Loyalty to his king prevented Montmorency from avenging the admiral. When Catherine arrested and imprisoned him for conspiring against herself, another of the family, Marshal Damville stood forth as chief of those Catholics who were for tolerance and accord with their Huguenot fellow-countrymen.

Any sovereign of France, guided by fair principles and honest views, must have hailed with gladness the formation of such a party. But it was the condemnation of Catherine and of her two elder sons, whose hands were stained with blood, and with whom, with Catherine at least, there could be no reconciliation. This indeed was impossible, for Catherine still pursued stealthily but resolutely her policy of cutting off the heads of parties whenever she had an opportunity. She sent Montgomery, taken prisoner in Domfront, to the scaffold, and she besought Matignon to entrap La Noue for the same purpose.* She kept Montmorency and Cossé in prison with the intention of sacrificing them, whenever their relative, Damville, was not in a position to take vengeance. On one occasion, indeed, orders were given for their murder, on the report that Damville was dead. And the rumour, preliminary to private assassinations, which Philip the Second always spread, that the prisoner was ill, was duly circulated with regard to the captive marshals. "I know the fate that is prepared for me," exclaimed Montmorency; "the queen has but to send me the apothecary of the Chancellor Birague, and I will swallow the cup he presents."

* Her letter to Matignon, June, 1574. MSS. Bethune, 8824.

The news of Damville's death proving false, the murder of the maréchal was adjourned.*

Catherine, however, had a plan for getting rid of her enemy, which she communicated to Henry. That prince had derived small profit or enjoyment from his distant crown. Proceeding to assume it, he had been grossly insulted by the Elector Palatine, who refused to descend from his apartment to receive him in the Castle of Heidelberg. When Henry did mount the staircase, the first object pointed out to him was a picture of the massacre of St. Bartholomew. The elector asked the prince if he had known the admiral. On his answering in the affirmative, the host observed, that his murderer deserved execration.†

When Henry reached Poland, instead of the gay court and licentious pleasures he had left behind, he was treated to Latin orations without end. He could communicate with his new subjects only by means of an interpreter, and at last he took refuge from the weariness of royal duties by remaining in bed for weeks, reading letters from and writing letters to France.‡ Some of these were penned, with his blood for ink, to the Princess of Condé, for whom he had conceived an extravagant attachment. When tidings came that he was king, his only thought was to escape. The royal palace and chapel at Cracow, where strangers still go to contemplate the tombs of Sobieski and Kosciusko, occupy a height, along which runs the city wall. It was thus easy for Henry to make his escape by night, and, though hotly pursued, to reach the Austrian territory, ere the Polish dignitaries and their suite could come up with him. He threatened to strike with his dagger

* Journal de L'Estoile.

† The Elector has himself left an account of Henry's visit and reception. See also the Journal de l'Estoile.

‡ For Henry's proceedings in Poland, see Mémoires de Jean Choisnin, and MSS. Fontanieu, pp. 327-8.

CHAP. XXV.

whoever proposed to bring him back, and with this adieu to Poland, Henry hastened to Vienna.

Well received there and at Venice, the Prince seemed to shrink from entering upon the active duties of French kingship, with the same eagerness with which he had escaped from those of the Polish crown. The emperor and the Venetians gave him the advice to adopt a lenient and tolerant policy, the former asserting that "religion must be planted by doctrine, not by arms." The counsels which he received from his mother were of an opposite tendency. Catherine felt herself and her influence personally threatened by the middle or political party that Marshal Damville had formed in the south, and the support he both gave to and received from the Huguenots. Henry wrote to the marshal from Ferrara*, to meet him at Turin, and leave his fortresses to the care of Joyeuse. Damville obeyed and hoped to have made a favourable impression upon Henry, when he was informed by the Duke and Duchess of Savoy, that they were besought to aid in arresting him. He instantly escaped from the treacherous plot that Catherine had laid for him, and regaining Languedoc, renewed and confirmed his alliance with the Huguenots.

Catherine drew up for Henry, and sent by Cheverny, most excellent advice as to his private conduct. She bade him show himself no longer *compagnon* but *maistre* —to keep the key of his privy seal himself—to evince no hatred for any that approached him, and not to commit the fault of his father, who, under the influence of Diana of Poitiers, changed at once on his accession all his predecessor's ministers and servants. These and other habits of prudent government, especially respecting the receipt and expenditure of money, Catherine begged her son to adopt from the first, even before he

* Letter of August 1. MSS. Bethune, 8823.

saw her. "For if not done at once, these things could not be done at all."*

The advice of his mother so far prevailed with Henry, as to make him prefer severity to clemency and toleration, but it was no longer possible to inspire him with the activity which could alone render severity and firmness effectual for maintaining his authority. Although he was fuller in body, less livid and earthy in complexion† than he had previously been, he was more indisposed to exertion. He took no pleasure in the chase like Charles, nor in tournaments like his father; and he hailed the royal dignity rather as a bed of repose than as offering means and scope for ambition. He repaid the Duke of Savoy's attention to him by restoring to him Pignerol, Perosa, and Savigliano, fortresses still retained by the French. Henry in this followed the policy of Catherine, who deemed Italian possessions more onerous than advantageous. But it excited discontent amongst the ardent French, and still more amongst the Italians attached to the French court. One of these, Gonzaga, Duke of Nevers, loudly protested against the cession.

Henry crossed the Alps early in September, and conferred at last at Lyons with his mother, who brought with her the King of Navarre and the Duke of Alençon. They could use no other language than that of submission. It became necessary to decide upon a line of policy. A papal envoy who came with permission to the king to sell a certain amount of church revenue, demanded, in return, the publication of the decrees of Trent, the extinction of heresy, and the execution of the nobles now in prison suspected of favouring if not participating in it.‡ Henry shrank from these extreme acts and their troublous consequences, but to compen-

* MS. Fontanieu, 355, copied from MS. Bethune.

† Michele, Relatione. MSS. Dupuy, 769.

‡ Letters of the ambassador Ferral in MSS. Colbert, 338.

CHAP. XXV.

sate for the refusal he gave most theatrical proofs of his religious zeal. He attended all kinds of ceremonies and processions, and soon after became affiliated with all his court to a *confrérie* of flagellants or *battus*, whose piety consisted in being scourged through the streets. Catherine disapproved of such mummery*, but the Cardinal of Lorraine, not wishing to be behindhand in the pious demonstration, took a cold and fever from the exposure, and died of the consequences.†

The cardinal's worth, as a politician, has been greatly exaggerated by his biographers. Devoid of judgment as of principle, going more than half-way to join the reformers at one time, and loudly approving the Augsburg Confession, contact with the Italians or flattery from Spain easily won him back to orthodoxy, which he then became furious in maintaining by fire and sword. As head of the House of Lorraine, the young Queen of Scots was naturally in his guidance; yet he flung her off, first to be the sport of her own and her country's passions, and then prompted her to irritate Elizabeth by vain plots and the idlest schemes. The eminence of the House of Guise was achieved by the military vigour, the princely rank and weapons of its successive dukes, not by the political talents of its churchmen.

From the south, where he effected little, the king proceeded to Rheims to be crowned. He was suspected of entertaining a design to espouse the Princess of Condé, after procuring her divorce from her Huguenot husband, who was then endeavouring to excite the German princes to invade France. But the sudden death of the princess removed Catherine's fear of seeing

* She afterwards threatened to make a comedy of such proceedings! Etats Généraux, f. xiii. p. 114.

† For the court life and proceedings at this time, see Claude de Lorraine's letter of November 20. MSS. Bethune, 8676. Yet Henry's desire at that time to conciliate all parties is proved in his letters to M. de Rambouillet, preserved in the collection of M. Lucas de Montigny.

her son commit such an act of folly. Henry had previously admired Louise, daughter of the Count de Vaudemont, of the House of Lorraine. He invited the family to his coronation at Rheims, and the marriage between them was celebrated without delay (February, 1575). The solemnity was an excuse for *fêtes* and for the levy of several millions from Paris and other good towns. The greater part was expended on the king's favourites, instead of being applied, as promised, to the reduction of the Huguenots. The Catholic party, especially in Paris, was indignant at such remissness, and began to vent their indignation in pamphlets.

The zealots, nay, the conscientious Catholics, had indeed reason for discontent. The Church was heavily taxed to supply the public necessities of the government*, yet the Huguenots, masters of the south, seized the ecclesiastical as well as royal revenues there, deprived the king of almost half of his realm, and made the boldest demands, not only of tolerance but of equality, which Henry and Catherine met by negotiations, not armies. The Huguenots of the south and west had elected Marshal Damville their captain-general; he agreed to consult in all his acts a council chiefly composed of their delegates. In this capacity he had issued a manifesto from Montpellier, complaining that there had now been fourteen years of civil war, the good towns and the provinces ravaged, without result or profit, that a large body of the nobility enticed to court by the royal word had been perfidiously massacred without law or justice, that the dignitaries of the kingdom and the command of the army were given to foreigners, and the native noblesse set aside in con-

* Henry, says L'Estoile, raised a million of taxes on the clergy in 1574; and during the wars in 1575, he continued to double and triple the payment. The bishopric of Grenoble was sold for 40,000 francs; that of Amiens for 30,000.

CHAP. XXV.

tempt. As remedies for this universal discord he proposed a *concile* for the settlement of religious disputes, and the states-general as the only means of putting an end to political abuses.*

Such menacing demands the court eluded rather than resisted. Damville was successful in Provence; whilst the Duke of Montpensier in the west merely performed the feat of rasing the castle of Lusignan, celebrated for its architectural grandeur and fabulous renown. As the southerners, however, were contented to remain for the most part on the defensive, Henry did not see the necessity of active war until he was roused by the flight of his brother Alençon in September 1575.

This prince, by the death of Charles the Ninth, succeeded to the position of his brother Henry, but not to his favour with Catherine. There had been enmity between them which almost came to blows during the siege of La Rochelle.† And the younger was little satisfied with his brother's reception of him at Lyons. This even drove him into hasty conspiracies against the new king, which were discovered, Alençon betraying that he had large offers of pecuniary and military aid from English agents if he would declare himself for the Huguenots.‡ Catherine appeased Henry, whose suspicions were awakened by a severe pain in the ear. This he attributed to some design of his brother against his life; and he sought to persuade the King of Navarre to kill Alençon, and thus remove a rival between him and the throne.§ But this prince, however he acquiesced, and even joined, in the licentiousness of the court, declared that neither greatness nor prosperity were to be attained by crime. Although

* Declaration from Montpellier, MSS. Fontanieu, 335.

† Michele. He represents Alençon as strong, though small, and *tutto massaccio.*

‡ La Mothe Fenelon, tom. vii. p. 472.

§ Matthieu.

the king forgave his brother, he still refused him the post which he sought of lieutenant-general of the kingdom. Alençon remained in constant communication with Damville*, and at last, in September, he managed to escape from court to Dreux, whence he sent forth a manifesto very much resembling in spirit that published by the marshal.

The apparition of a prince of the blood at the head of the malcontents of the kingdom instantly magnified the importance of these in the minds of foreign potentates, and Condé found no difficulty in persuading the Count Palatine and other German princes to send a body of reistres to the service of Alençon.† The court had no army to oppose to their march, save such as might be feudally raised. And this the Duke of Guise, as governor of Champagne, and as personally influential, could alone perform. He accordingly received the commission and gave his whole energies to execute it‡; whilst Catherine, dreading alike the successes of the malcontents and those of Guise, hurried after Alençon to offer him the most advantageous terms and win him back to loyalty and peace. The duke refused to meet his mother until he was behind the Loire. And he at last only consented to an interview, when his sanguine hopes were somewhat dashed by a defeat, which the Duke of Guise had inflicted on the reistres near Attigny, on the 10th of October.§ He put them completely to the rout, but being severely wounded, as his father had been, in the eye, a wound from which he acquired the name of Le Balafré, he was obliged to be carried off the field, Thoré and Condé succeeding to bring 4,000 of the reistres safe to Damville. Catherine

* His letters to Damville are copied into Fontanieu, 335–6–7–8.

† Capitulations of Condé with Casimir; second document in MSS. Colbert, 29.

‡ Guise's total want of money is depicted in his letters. MSS. Gagnières, 354.

§ Same vol. of MSS. Gagnières.

CHAP. XXV.

was not encouraged by Guise's success to inflict harder terms upon Alençon. She, on the contrary, wrote to the king, "that if he did not make peace he was lost. And that for her part, she had rather see him dead than vanquished, or a fugitive."* Henry gave her full power. She made offer to the Duke of Anjou and Touraine in appanage. He, at the suggestion of Damville, insisted, as a preliminary, on the liberation of Marshals Montmorency and Cossé, to which Catherine not only assented, but urged Henry to load Montmorency with kindness in order to induce him to further the work of peace (October). This the marshal not only promised but accomplished. The southerns consented to a truce in November (1575).† Five towns—namely, Angoulême, Niort, Saumur, Bourges, and La Charité — were to be given up to Alençon, and Mezières to Condé, in addition to what the Huguenots already held, whilst the German troops were to be paid 500,000 livres, and dismissed by the court.

The conditions which were granted to the Huguenots were, perhaps not in the intention, but at least not in the power, of Henry to fulfil. Ruffec, the governor of Angoulême, refused to surrender it; and the court was obliged to give Cognac and St. Jean d'Angely in its place. Mezières, in the hands of Condé, would not only give him a fortress in the north, on the borders of Lorraine, but facilitate his introducing his Protestant allies from Germany into the kingdom. The Guises, of course, opposed the conditions of the truce, and their power nullified it. Neither could the court find money to pay the reistres, whose demands far exceeded the 500,000 livres, even had these been forthcoming.‡

* Copied in Fontanieu, p. 338, from MSS. Rothelin.

† Walsingham at the time warned Condé how much preferable open war was to a deceitful peace. MSS. Colbert, 299. But Alençon declared that a total want of funds to satisfy the reistres compelled him to make peace. MS. Bethune, 8714, fol. 85. See Mémoires de Nevers.

‡ The 8th vol. of MSS. Colbert, V.C., is filled with a mass of letters

Alençon complained, that instead of the conditions of the truce being observed, attempts were made to poison him; and he wrote in January to Duke Casimir not to withdraw his reistres from France till the king had performed his promise.* CHAP. XXV.

During three months of suspense and inaction, the Huguenot cause received a greater accession of strength and consideration than the sons of Catherine could bring them, by the escape from court of the King of Navarre. The queen mother had employed her utmost ingenuity to captivate or neutralise this young monarch. She sowed rivalry between him and Alençon by promising him the lieutenant-generalship of the kingdom; and she instructed one of her beautiful attendants, Madame de Sauve, to coquet with both. Henry of Navarre had apparently resigned himself to court captivity and to Catholic orthodoxy. He sought relief in gallantry and pleasure. He even lived on terms of intimacy with the Duke of Guise, who, on one occasion, offered him his sword to support his eventual right to the succession. From despair or dissimulation he seemed so completely to have abandoned all ideas of embracing the cause of the Huguenots, that most of his friends of that persuasion suspected his fidelity to them. D'Aubigné and Armagnac were indeed about to leave his service, when, one night that the King of Navarre was suffering from fever, they heard him murmur a stanza of the 88th Psalm, in which the desertion of friends is complained of as the most poignant of griefs. Hearing this, one of them broke forth, saying: "Is it then true, sire, that the spirit of God still lives and works in you; and that you sigh

relative to the payment of these reistres, and fully shows the penury of the court. There was an independent body of these troops under Mansfeldt, that the king desired to take into his pay; but he was totally unable to make them an advance.

* MSS. Colbert, V.C. viii.

CHAP. XXV.

for the absence of friends, who, like us, are labourers for your deliverance? You vent your sorrow in tears: they their resentment in arms. They worship God, and you adore women. And you are contented to play the valet here, instead of living a master in your own dominions."

These faithful followers associated others, such as Fervaques and Laverdet in a plot, not only for Henry's escape, but for the simultaneous seizure of Le Mans, Chartres, and Cherbourg. A hunting party at St. Germains was fixed upon as the best opportunity for escaping to join Alençon in the west. But the court was suspicious, and Henry went to enjoy his sport at Senlis, ill situated for escape. Here, however, he learned that he was betrayed, and that Fervaques had revealed the whole plan to the king. Henry took at once his resolve, rode off at full speed, passed the Seine at Poissy towards daybreak next morning, and succeeded in reaching Alençon and Saumur. It was Fervaques who betrayed him, yet who, on second thoughts, warned him to escape. The same Fervaques followed him, and though every way a traitor (for he remained in communication with Catherine), he still continued to retain so much influence with Henry that he dissuaded him from declaring himself a Protestant, and represented how much better for his interests, and even for those of his party, that he should continue to conform to Catholicism. Hence, says D'Aubigné, the little court of Saumur remained without any religion whatever for the space of three months.

The incertitude of his attitude and his conduct rendered the King of Navarre of little influence in the affairs of the war, which consisted merely of a successful march of Condé, with his German allies, through Burgundy to meet Damville; whilst the Duke of Mayenne, without money and without the foreign troops promised him, was unable to fight or intercept

CHAP. XXV.

them.* Catherine, in consequence, induced her son to conclude the war on any terms; and for the fifth time since hostilities had commenced, a treaty of peace was concluded April 1576, known by the name of the *Paix de Monsieur*. The edict of pacification was issued in May, differing from all those which had preceded it by not attempting to establish one rule of tolerance for the whole kingdom. The parties were now too distinct, too separate, to permit of a common law for both. The free exercise of the Huguenot worship was permitted in towns that *belonged to them*, and where they predominated, they promising, meanwhile, to pay tithes, and observe the festivals of the Catholic church. This parking off Protestants and Catholics in different districts, and under separate laws, an arrangement which prevailed even down to the Edict of Nantes inclusively, was one of the great causes of enduring enmity, and of the Protestants being treated in the following century as strangers and as rebels. The arrangement was considered temporary, and until such time as a national council should regulate the accordance of the two religions. The states-general, it was ruled in one of the articles, were to be convoked. There was to be a mixed court of judges, in each great parliament, for trials in which Huguenots were concerned. The rebellious chiefs were largely bribed. Alençon was to have Touraine and Anjou in appanage; the King of Navarre the government of Guyenne; Duke Casimir to have a large sum of money and an appanage in France. But the most obnoxious concession of Catherine was the grant of the government of Picardy to Condé.†

Although these latter stipulations were conveyed in a secret and additional treaty, they soon became known,

* The Duke of Mayenne's numerous letters. MSS. Colbert, V.C. viii.

† La Popelinière, L'Estoile, &c.

CHAP. XXV.

and excited throughout all parts and persons of the land, not engaged in resistance, one burst of indignation and rage. Notwithstanding the violence of this sentiment, it is easy to be discerned that the great majority of the French, both on the one side and the other, were not so much inspired by religious differences or convictions as by antagonism of interest, of class, and by that struggle for influence, emolument, and power, which, especially where it has endured some time, is quite sufficient to light up all the fierceness of faction. The boasted policy of Catherine of Medicis, which consisted of mere cunning and jealousy of all eminence and greatness, had conducted the government on the principles of Louis the Eleventh rather than upon those of Francis the First. He had striven to wage war as well as conclude alliances and manage diplomacy without the aid of the nobles. She procured funds by loans, or levies on the good towns, or from the Church; and with these she raised, not only foot soldiers as in more ancient times, but *reistres*, or horse, who superseded the mounted gentlemen, and was largely paid.* This left the gentry of the country totally unemployed. The gendarmerie existed, but it remained in the provinces, small in number and ill paid; whilst the guard of the king was entrusted to Swiss and Scotch. One great cause of the Catholic gentry of the south rallying to Damville against the crown was, that he raised money from the Huguenot towns with which he kept on foot an army; paid its officers, and chose them from amongst the gentry. The example and the temptation were great to induce the Duke of Guise, equally

* By virtue of the treaty, Henry of Navarre dismissed the garrisons and captives in the south, and nominated the judges of the parliaments therein, in order to form a mixed court. The Conseillers of the Parisian parliament refused to sit in them. Henry's letters, MSS. Bethune, 8691.

powerful in the north, to do the same in that region. The humiliating pacification of 1576, which so unfairly rewarded the chiefs of the south and their army with indemnity and appanages, offered him the opportunity, and he had but to raise the standard for every gentleman to flock to it.

Picardy was a province in which, as previously remarked, the civic class were in small proportion to the agricultural. The gentry predominated, and the northern wars had accustomed them to serve in the gendarmerie. They were peculiarly irritated with the court for employing foreigners in preference to them. By the late treaty the province was given to the Prince of Condé, who, as a Huguenot, was certain not to trust or employ the Picard gentlemen. He was to have its fortresses also, and amongst them Peronne, more important than even Mezières, which had previously been assigned him.

The discontent of the Picard gentlemen was great, that of the clergy still greater. Both looked to Guise, who promoted the spirit of resistance. And the Picards, at his suggestion, entered into one of those associations, which were common at the time*, and of which the Huguenots themselves offered the most remarkable example, by which the gentry of the country and the burgesses of towns united for a certain aim, agreed to make common cause, and raise, if necessary, funds and forces. The first object of this social league was to prevent Condé from getting possession of Peronne, and with it of the military government of Picardy. But as this was to stand up in opposition to the principal clause of the late treaty, and consequently

* Picard Association, MSS. Bethune, 8832. The League was not signed at Peronne till February, 1577. M. Michelet has well defined the difference between the Protestant and the Catholic associations; the latter were for offence, persecution, and proscription, the Protestants simply for self-defence.

CHAP. XXV.

to set the court and king at defiance, it was necessary to organise the league on a broad basis. Accordingly, it was extended to the neighbouring provinces, and even to adjoining nations, which could imply but an alliance with Spain and the Duke of Alva against Henry the Third and the Huguenots.

Loyalty, however, was still too strong in the breast of gentility to permit of setting aside the king without strong reasons. In all the drafts of the League at first, and among its conditions, was inserted a clause that its statutes and provisions should be submitted to his majesty, and directed to the aim of establishing him upon his throne. It was agreed to concert with him, and first of all make the solemn demand, what were the king's intentions with respect to the Huguenots. The basis of religion was what gave most strength. The cause of Catholicism was that of Rome, of Spain, of the majority of the noblesse in France, and of its totality in the north. And whilst there existed strong political and interested reasons for upholding the Roman faith in its integrity, there was not wanting a large amount of semi-fanaticism which rejected the tenets of the reformers as destructive of the unity of the Church, and as exchanging the traditional faith of ages for the opinions and the glosses of a few amongst the modern learned.

If the provinces of the north showed at first an apparent unanimity of class, those immediately south of the Loire displayed a different spirit. In Poitou a placard appeared, in which the people complained of the oppression of *marchand* and *paysant* by the nobles who profited by the civil war, and took care not to hurt each other, whilst their chief aim was to plunder the industrious. *Religion was not the true cause of these wars*, and there were 20,000 persons in Poitou, Catholics as well as Protestants, determined to put an end

CHAP. XXV.

to such a state of things.* The nobles replied to this manifesto of the humbler class by an association exclusively of the well-born. And though they could at a later period muster but seventy at St. Hermine, they still constituted a league in alliance and communication with those of the north, determined on supporting the interests of their caste, and of religion in connection with it.†

Amongst the most fanatic supporters of the League were the Parisians, from whose learned, judicial, and municipal bodies the Protestants had been weeded by proscription and executions. Implicated more or less in the massacre of St. Bartholomew, they were shocked to find in the treaty of peace that Coligny's memory was discharged of all the crimes imputed to him, and he and his friends completely exculpated of conspiracy or wrong.

The lenience of the king towards the Huguenots was not his only crime in the eyes of the Parisians, upon whom, as well as on all the towns under his authority, he levied large sums. The Parisians furnished 34,000 livres monthly for the pay of the Swiss. And the dignitaries of parliament were subjected to a forced loan to satisfy the reistres, for which purpose Henry had at the same time been obliged to engage the jewels of his crown. In April (1576) the monarch held a bed of justice and proposed further exactions, which the citizens and the provost rudely rejected, complaining

* La Popelinière.

† The dissensions of class were very evident at La Rochelle. The Spanish envoy, Alava, writes (Simancas Papers) that many of the gentry in La Rochelle would take no engagement with regard to religion. At a later period the citizens objected to receive Condé, lest they should fall under the *joug et subjection de la noblesse*. On the other hand, the nobles of Maine, when it was proposed to raise a contribution to pay the reistres, refused to be taxed by the Tiers Etat. Lettres de Henri IV., t. i. p. 19. Similar symptoms manifested themselves later in Dauphiné and Auvergne, where, says L'Estoile, sprung up "*la Ligue d'Equite*, an uprising of the commons against the king and the noblesse."

CHAP. XXV.

that the king had squandered 700,000 francs in pensions during the last two years, and comparing him to Rehoboam, who flung away the advice of the old, and listened only to the suggestions of the young. Henry took his revenge by seizing, at the Hotel de Ville, the sums furnished by the clergy for paying the two quarters' interest of the civic debt.*

The discontent and disaffection which the imprudent conduct of Henry excited in the Parisians suggested to an ambitious lawyer of the name of David, the project of getting up a competitor to his power, and even to his dynasty. David's doctrine was that the Capets and their descendants were an usurping and accursed race, who had unjustly torn the crown from that of Charlemagne, and who did not inherit the solemn blessing conferred on that monarch and his descendants by the Pope. The House of Lorraine, according to David, was the true descendant of Charlemagne, and Henry of Valois and his brothers ought now to be thrust into convents, like Chilperic, and all power concentrated in the Guises. So audacious a project could only acquire consistency from papal sanction, which David, after having broached the doctrine, set forth to obtain. Whatever was his success, he died ere he could return to Paris, and it was the Huguenots who, having got hold of his written scheme, published it for the edification of the country.

Although the Duke of Guise was a man likely to grasp any measure for obtaining the throne, he placed his reliance on more practical measures than the pleading of David. He and the leaguers were assured of the adhesion of the capital as well as of Rouen and the other towns which held with it. But their peculiar strength lay in their own feudal organisation and in the calling to life and activity the military strength and

* L'Estoile. The Rentes amounted to 3,132,000 livres *chaque an*, says D'Aubigné.

financial resources of the rural districts, which the court had set aside and neglected.

By the League each province was to raise 2,000 foot and 400 horse besides the gendarmerie, which should be prepared to serve for four months in the year, in order to reduce to their obedience the towns declared to belong to the Huguenots. This was, in fact, employing the *ban* and *arrière-ban* of the gentry and their vassals throughout the Catholic provinces, in a manner altogether independent of the king, and under the command, not of his officers, but of Guise. The royal authority was threatened with annihilation. The towns took advantage of their religious interests to render themselves independent, the Huguenots here, the Catholics there, whilst the chiefs of the aristocracy literally divided the provinces amongst them. Alençon held Anjou and Touraine, the King of Navarre, Guyenne; Damville, Languedoc; Guise, Champagne; Mayenne, Burgundy; Montpensier, Brittany; and Aumale, in despite of the Treaty, held Picardy against Condé. This sway was not, indeed, exercised without opposition, the opposition not of loyalty or legality, but of partisanship. In September a Huguenot officer seized La Charité, which gave passage over the Loire. The Admiral Villars induced the authorities of Bordeaux to refuse entrance within their walls to the King of Navarre, governor of the province. A Catholic chief, in the service of Damville, was bribed by the opposite party to seize Pont St. Esprit, and arrest the marshal's brother, Thoré. Such was the result of Catherine's fine policy of setting aside the more eminent of the princes and nobles. She, as well as the king, was overwhelmed and over-ridden, and their only hope of recovering authority lay in the states-general, which was convoked for December, at Blois.

Between the two strong and almost independent parties, a firm and respected sovereign might have held

CHAP. XXV.

the balance. Had Henry the Third possessed these qualities, he had a middle party ready formed, anxious and powerful to aid him in the task of putting down the fanatics of either religion. But Henry was like a child, always ready to quarrel with those with whom he had last made peace and friendship. Nor, indeed, did he derive from the Protestant alliance those advantages which he sought and prized. They granted him peace indeed, but their submission was partial. They remained organised and armed, and seemed determined to keep to themselves the political and military lead, as well as the financial resources of the south.*

The king was thus obliged to place all his hopes of obtaining financial aid and recovering political authority in the estates which he had convoked. He did not, however, pursue the right mode of rendering them favourable or useful to him. The plan which he conceived was to outbid the ultra Catholics and the Guises, to supersede the League by putting himself at its head, modifying the clauses which encroached on the prerogative and in that shape ordering it to be signed by his followers. In this same spirit he determined to meet the estates with the declaration, that he would suffer but one religion in his kingdom. In answer to such zeal, the estates, Henry calculated, could do no less than make a large pecuniary grant to enable him to raise an army wherewith to crush the Huguenots, but which he knew would serve equally to put down the leaguers. These laboured to defeat the scheme. They looked to have themselves the conduct of the war against the Huguenots, which it was their purpose to make by the feudal force of each province, and not by the employ of foreign troops and the heavy taxation requisite to pay them.

* See Henry's long letter of bitterness and complaint to Villeroy in MS. Bethune, 8888, against Damville and the Huguenots. "Je serai mieux trouvé," he writes, "si j'eusse suivi l'aspreté du feu roi, mon frère, devant sa mort."

CHAP. XXV.

An inevitable consequence of the king's scheme and of the declaration he was about to make, was the alienation of the Huguenot party. His words indeed were to be a breach of the late treaty, a recall of the Edict of Pacification, and a renewal of the war. He hoped to obviate this by secret assurances to the reformers, so as at least to restrain their impatience until he was prepared to meet it.* But the adherence which Henry was from the first obliged to give to the Catholics aroused the suspicions of their enemies. His order for the management of the elections was necessarily one-sided. The votes were often taken in church at the time of mass, which prevented the reformers altogether from attending. When a Protestant return was made, as at Etampes, the member was set aside. The promise had been made that the fortifications of Blois should be levelled, and the town be free from troops during the holding of the estates. But the fortifications were allowed to remain untouched, and troops almost amounting to an army came to garrison them. No wonder that the principal Huguenots, with the memory of St. Bartholomew so fresh, refused to attend the meeting or trust themselves to their enemies. They held aloof. The Prince of Condé published a formal protest against the validity of the estates. The King of Navarre staid away also, and made known his reasons for recurring to arms.† The Duke of Alençon alone came to court, and in return for empty promises, consented to a reconciliation with Henry.‡

* The king's despatch to the local governors and officers to reassure the Protestants is preserved in MSS. Bethune, 8832, fol. 83.

† Déclaration des justes causes qui ont contraint le roi de Navarre de prendre les armes.

‡ Alençon's views at the time were directed to a marriage with Queen Elizabeth, and to the sovereignty of the Low-Countries. The Estates of Brabant, Hainault, &c., then negotiating both with the Prince of Orange and Don John of Austria, also sent envoys to France. Henry and Catherine, at first willing to second this scheme, were deterred by the good understanding between the Duke of Guise and Don John, who came through France incognito,

CHAP. XXV.

The first estates of Blois were opened in mid-December 1576, with a solemn and unmeaning discourse of the king, who hastened to demonstrate his catholicity by demanding that the assembly should join him in declaring but one religion to be tolerated in the country. Those provinces in which Catholicism was triumphant eagerly supported such a declaration, from a desire of political and financial as well as of religious unity, many not foreseeing the difficulty and danger of enforcing such an order. Those better aware that the consequence would be civil war, deprecated a declaration so uncompromising. The court laboured to overcome the objection, pointing out to their confidants, that the Guises were pressing town and country to join their association, and that the only means of defeating their purpose and rallying the country to a mitigated League, with the king, and not Guise at its head, was to issue the declaration in favour of one religion. The majority of the members adopted the king's proposal, on the 26th of December, namely, the deputies for the Isle of France, Normandy, Champagne, Languedoc, Picardy, and Rouen. Those of Burgundy, Britanny, Guyenne, the Lyonnais and Dauphiné proposed to add that unity of religion should be brought about by pacific measures.* After having listened in solemn assembly to the demands of the three estates, the deputies of the commons standing bareheaded, whilst the rest sat covered, the king made his financial demand of two millions of livres of ready money to meet pressing necessities, and of fifteen millions annually to be raised by *octroi* upon hearths in lieu of all the other *aides* and subsidies. This demand the estates flatly refused to entertain. And although daily tidings arrived of the Protestants having seized

and had interviews with the Duke. Henry, therefore, dissuaded his brother from the attempt, and recommended the Flemish estates to be reconciled to Spain. See Henry the Third's letter to D'Abain, his minister at Rome, in MS. Dupuy, 350.

* Etats Généraux, vol. xiii. p. 228.

important towns, the majority preferred trusting to the League to put down the rebellion as a more sure and economical way than enabling the king to raise and pay a royal army.

Henry's provocation of the Protestants thus went for little, and procured him few of the advantages he expected. Catherine was indignant, and exclaimed against the absurdity of insisting upon but one religion in the kingdom without any means of enforcing it. The deputies themselves became many of them aware and ashamed of the extravagance of provoking war. Bodin, deputy for the Vermandois, and author of the famous work on the *Republic*, exerted his eloquence and his good sense in proving this.

The Duke of Montpensier, an ardent Catholic, who had just returned from a mission of peace to the King of Navarre, openly represented to the estates the madness of insisting upon maintaining the papal religion exclusively in the face of Protestantism in arms. And the commons in obedience to his suggestion rescinded their vote. There is still extant full reports of the opinions delivered by each member of the royal council on the course to be pursued; whether that of peace or of war with the Huguenots.* The Chancellor Birague considered, that if there was any hope of Marshal Damville in Languedoc, and of the King of Navarre in Guyenne, accepting terms and not making resistance, it would be expedient to crush Protestant resistance by the sword. As Catherine had reason to entertain no such hopes, she also pressed for war, not merely with the view to reduce the more refractory Huguenots, but to place the king in command of an army, and thus restore his authority, enabling him to impose peace upon both parties.† This army she proposed

* In vol. xxix. of MSS. Colbert, V. C., which indeed contains most of the documents relative to the period.

† Chancellor Birague writes in April to the Duc de Nevers, that if La Charité be taken, there will be

CHAP. XXV.

to collect both from the "garrisons" and the "associations," a mixed force, in fact, of the regular gendarmerie and the feudal regiments of the ultra-Catholics.

Whilst adopting and patronising the League, Henry continued to fence with its chiefs. Those in Picardy—Rubempré, Crévecœur, and Guise—endeavoured to introduce clauses the most offensive to royalty. They proposed an oath to obey the decision of the Estates, or a commission of them, at the time when these had decreed the existence of but one religion. Henry sought to substitute "obedience to the king, after he had heard the remonstrances of his Estates." They required that the gens-d'armes, or regular troops, should swear to the League, and obey its orders, during the four months of the year, the term of feudal service. Henry inserted the proviso that it should be only in case that those troops were not employed by himself. Even in Picardy the king might have seen how much the civic class were inclined to rally to him against the pretensions of the leagued noblesse, had he been moderate in his demands or in his expenditure, and had he shown his word to be trustworthy. The citizens of Amiens refused to sign the League, and despatched envoys to Henry, offering him a large sum if he would dispense them from signing it. They saw themselves completely at the mercy of the noblesse if they did so, and looked forward to be far more heavily mulcted by them than by the crown if they consented. The people of Amiens were not able to protect themselves like the Parisians. The king, far from hearkening to their complaints, recommended their submission.*

Henry was not without deriving some benefit from their apparent humility. He was able to demand money of Paris and other towns in the name of the

peace, by mid-May. MS. Bethune, 8835, f. 36.

* For this affair of Amiens and the League, with Henry's letter, see MSS. Bethune, vol. 8820.

League, as well as in that of the government. And though such sums were grudgingly bestowed, the Parisians giving but 100,000 livres, still this was sufficient to gratify his armies with a month's pay. Guise was the chief instrument in raising the army which marched to Poitou, but whilst he and his brother Aumale served in it, the supreme command was given to Alençon, styled the Duke of Anjou since the last treaty. The western army was given to the Duke of Mayenne, the least dreaded of the Guise brethren. There was somewhat of treachery in Anjou's singling out the objects of his attack. These were the towns of La Charité and Issoire, both of which had recently applied to him, when he was in Huguenot interests, to furnish them with men and supplies, without which they declared themselves unable to resist the Catholics.* The people of La Charité would not believe that the prince, who was so lately of their party, was now marching against them, and they took such small precautions that not more "than forty-five gentlemen, with three followers each," threw themselves into the town to defend it.† When the walls were beaten in by the duke's artillery, there were but fifteen men at arms, and thirty-five arquebusiers to defend each breach. La Charité of course fell. The king then ordered the victorious army to march through Auvergne into Languedoc, to destroy the abundant harvest of the year. If this were not done, he wrote, the southerners would not give in for three or four years.‡ The Duke of Anjou having gone to court to be feasted, Henry appointed the Duke of Nevers to succeed him, but he declining, the court, rather than appoint Guise, induced Anjou to return to the command, and lay siege to Issoire. On the breach being made, its defenders

* Letter of Alençon to Condé, Oct. 1576, in MS. Colbert, 29.

† D'Aubigné.

‡ Henry's letter to Anjou, May 3, 1577. MSS. Bethune, 8840.

CHAP. XXV.

were found to be in a great part women. The besiegers carried it, and exercised their right of victory to the full, sparing neither sex nor age.

Whilst the Duke of Anjou with an inconsiderable army was thus victorious over the Huguenots in the centre of France, the Duke of Mayenne, with no greater force, was equally successful against them in the west. Instead of exciting the zeal of the people of La Rochelle against the common enemy, Condé quarrelled continually with its ministers and townsmen, whom the licence of some of his bands disgusted.* The Duke of Mayenne, finding himself from these causes unresisted, captured town after town, and at last laid siege to that of Brouage. His army consisting chiefly of gentry feudally raised, he had not infantry to storm a breach. But Henry, after his brother's capture of Issoire, recalled him, and directed his army to Perigueux, from which its lansquenets and French foot were ordered to join the Duke of Mayenne. Thus beset by the two Catholic armies united, Brouage was forced to capitulate.

This prostration of the Huguenot party, by no very strenuous efforts of the Catholics and of the court, was due not merely to the unpopularity of Condé with the Rochellois, but to the fact, that the Maréchal Damville, hitherto the successful leader of the Huguenots and moderate Catholics in Languedoc, had become partially reconciled to the court†; whilst the King of Navarre, witness of so important a defection, showed himself more inclined to follow the example than support the resistance of Condé.

Damville and Navarre, however at first resentful of the breach of the Edict of Pacification, were soon made to perceive that the acts of the king were dictated more by a desire to shake off the ascendency of the Guises,

* D'Aubigné, l. iii. c. 8.

† Letters to and from Damville, copied into Fontanieu. MSS. 346, also MSS. Bethune, 8836.

than to crush the Huguenots. It was the League, and not they, which really menaced the king, and they already foresaw the possibility of an alliance with Henry against the Guises. Marshal Damville, who was about to succeed to the chiefdom of the house of Montmorency *, looked to resume the old position of this family at court in opposition to the house of Lorraine, whilst he was harassed and provoked in Languedoc by the suspicions and even insolence of the Huguenots. Henry offered him the marquisate of Saluzzo.† His relations with the court becoming known to the Languedoc Protestants, they rejected Damville. Montpellier and other towns throwing off his authority, and the breach widening, he levied open war upon them, and even laid siege to Montpellier. Such a state of things of course prevented the Huguenots of Languedoc from saving La Charité, or coming to the defence of their brethren in Auvergne.

The King of Navarre was swayed by similar, but stronger motives than Marshal Damville. The League was directed by the Guises more especially against him. One of its clauses prescribed an oath to maintain the crown in the family of Valois exclusively, thereby refusing to acknowledge the rightful claim of the house of Bourbon to stand next in succession. To ally with Henry the Third against such foes must have been the firm desire of the King of Navarre. Moreover, the monarch, though he had resumed his young profession of Protestantism, was by no means a zealot for any particular form of Christianity; and, as he himself expressed it about this time—"Those who follow the dictates of their conscience are of any religion. For I

* The Duke of Alençon, in his speech on peace or war (Colbert, 29), hints that Damville must rally to the crown for fear of losing the family heritage, about to descend to him. Damville did succeed to the Montmorency title and dukedom, 1579.

† MSS. Bethune, 8836.

CHAP. XXV.

am. fellow-religionist of all those who are brave and honest."*

Whilst the Huguenot chiefs were thus reluctant to wage violent war with the king, the latter was equally unwilling and unable to crush them. He could not muster funds wherewith to keep his army on foot; and it disbanded of its own accord so fast after the capture of Brouage, that he was obliged to recall its diminished numbers to Angoulême.† Under these circumstances, the negotiations of a peace could not be difficult. Negotiators on both sides met at Bergerac. The King of Navarre summoned the Protestant ministers to be present. They demanded complete toleration for their worship in every town. This the king could not grant; it would resuscitate the League at once. They then required fifty new places of surety. The Prince of Condé, too, was most recalcitrant; and he at one time threatened to go into Languedoc, and place himself at the head of the malcontents.‡

At length, on the 17th of September, the peace was signed at Bergerac. It considerably curtailed the advantages granted to the Reformers by the Peace of Monsieur in the preceding year. Instead of freedom of worship in a multitude of towns, it was again restrained to certain places in each bailliage, except in such towns as the Reformers held up to the end of September. In and around Paris it was also forbidden. In matters of marriages, fêtes, ceremonies, and tithes, the Huguenots were obliged to conform. Towns of surety were given them for six years. Aigues Mortes, and Montpellier in Languedoc; in Provence, Dauphiné and Guienne, the same towns as in the

* Letter to De Batz, 1577. Lettres du Roi de Navarre, t. i. p. 120.

† Henry's letter to the Duke of Nevers. MSS. Bethune, 8860, f. 100.

‡ Henry's letter to Damville. MSS. Bethune, 8836.

previous pacification. Issoire and Beaucaire were no longer amongst these given. In addition to the places for six years, the King of Navarre was to keep for a twelvemonth (till August 1578) sixteen important towns, and to receive 36,000 livres and the pay of their garrison.* The court, however, recovered one hundred and fifty places in Languedoc. Amongst the secret articles was the regulation of mixed courts for the trial of causes in which Protestants were concerned.

The Peace of Bergerac granted to the Huguenots, in despite of the intrigues and menaces of the League, and even of the victories to which it had mainly contributed, was, for the moment, a complete triumph over the party of intolerance and Guise. The king recovered an authority in the provinces which he had not previously enjoyed, and a fair amount of revenue, could he have economised, or have been contented with it. All, indeed, that was required to maintain his position was that degree of prudence, dignity, and consistency, which command respect. What the humbler classes asked was, peace and protection from the license of the soldiers and the rapaciousness of the taxman. What the aristocracy desired was a patron to whom they might look for emolument and advancement, honour and employ. The king, the national dispenser of these in an absolute monarchy, unfortunately shared his mother's aversion for men of birth and its pretensions. He preferred a few impotent favourites and low dependants, who could divest themselves of all dignity, restraint, and of even morality and decorum, in their intercourse with him. Henry's tastes were puerile and flagitious. Report or calumny exaggerated them into the bestial. And the noblesse of claims and talents hurried in

* Treaty of Bergerac. See MS. Colbert, 16. See La Popelinière Dupuy, 428. Secret Articles, and De Thou.

CHAP. XXV.

disgust from his service, to take up that of the Guises, of Henry of Navarre, or of Montmorency in Languedoc.

Purely religious fanaticism was on the decline. Montaigne told De Thou* that such a sentiment animated Guise no more than it did Navarre. And religious indifference, undoubtedly the creed of Catherine, was that into which the minds of the higher and educated classes lapsed after years of ill-directed fervour and bigot crime. Controversy had worn itself out; doctrinal disputes and colloquies were no longer held. Religious dogma ceased to be thrust forward. And although Roman Catholicism was the banner of the League, it was more as the Shibboleth of Spain and the Guises, of despotism and authority, than as abstract conviction or truth. The arguments employed by those who remonstrated with the monarch, or appealed to the people, became more political than polemic. The leaguers themselves, instead of exclusively insisting on the dangers which threatened the Church, complained of the capricious despotism, which set aside the noblesse, sought to raise taxes of its own authority, and debased the coin. They clamoured for the Estates, whilst the Normans especially demanded the fulfilment of the conditions of their ancient charter.

But the traditions of right and the principles of freedom had been so long stifled and forgotten, that mere incoherent fragments of them floated to the surface, to serve as the plaything of argument, not the motive of action. In the absence of political, and the decay of religious principle, what chiefly survived, attracted, and commanded, was personality. Men looked no longer to the cause, but to the man who was its leader. When the chiefs shrunk into inaction or repose, as they did after the Peace of Bergerac, the country enjoyed some tranquillity. But when, after

* Mémoires de F. A. De Thou, liv. iii.

a few years, the death of the Duke of Anjou left the King of Navarre and his race heir presumptive to Henry the Third and the Valois, the jealousies and hopes of the Guises and their partisans awakened, and the intensity of personal antagonism gave birth to a struggle more fierce than that which the novelty or the scandal of religious dissent had previously excited.

The six or seven years which elapsed from the Peace of Bergerac to the death of Anjou, and the consequent resuscitation of the League, might be treated as forming a blank in French history. The interest and action of the religious drama, the struggle between Protestantism and freedom on the one hand, Catholicism and despotism on the other, were transferred to the soil of Belgium and the court of Spain.* The prominent, though imbecile, part taken in the strife by the Duke of Anjou may have affected the cause in France, but did not implicate parties there. Henry the Third, and even Catherine, held aloof, however much the latter was interested for the success of her younger son. The brothers regarded each other with puerile hatred, and their inhabiting the same court or palace led to the most absurd rivalry between themselves, and the most ignoble squabbles amongst their followers. Each bestowed their favour and time, and lavished their resources on a band of young, handsome, swaggering gallants, to whom the king especially set the example of great extravagance, and, at the same time, effeminacy of dress. Their cheeks were painted, their necks adorned with starched frills of enormous dimensions, and their hair curled with a care exceeding male pretensions. Henry the Third carried this so far as to appeared accoutred in a female garb. These acts of

* The history of this struggle is so fully depicted in the pages of Motley and Prescott, that the writer of purely French annals may be contented with referring to them.

CHAP. XXV.

idiotcy the people construed to be indicative not merely of perverted taste, but of degrading crime; and the king's *mignons* were the object of such universal execration, that when they perished by the hands of each other or of more insidious foes, and when Henry consoled himself for their loss by the performance of splendid funeral rites, and the erection of superb mausoleums, the public applauded the acts of vengeance by which these base parasites were slain.

Strange to say, personal courage, inherent in the French gentleman, did not deteriorate even in this court world of dissoluteness. Frequent and fierce duelling attested that the minions flung away their lives as recklessly as they misused them. The followers of Anjou fought in encounters of six or eight of a side, with as many of Henry's favourites. Those around Guise, of more decorum and orthodox pretensions, preferred assassination, which to the hero of St. Bartholomew seemed no crime.

It was in the midst of this sink of dissoluteness that Henry the Third bethought of founding one of those great institutions of knighthood, which in other countries preserved the spirit of chivalry, even then upon the wane. In emulation of the Garter and the Golden Fleece, Henry founded the Order of the Saint Esprit—one blushes to translate the profanation. Aware that he had alienated the great magnates of his kingdom, he thought at once to rally and gratify them by this new order of exclusive knighthood, which was to be richly endowed out of ecclesiastical property.* It gave him the opportunity of binding the new knights by an oath of allegiance and fraternity to himself, which might counteract and replace that of the League. If chivalry and loyalty were mere luxurious plants, to grow best from a dung-heap, Henry's order of the Saint Esprit might have flourished.

* Which the Pope refused to sanction.

CHAP. XXV.

Such devices were quite unequal to establish tranquillity, especially in the south. There the towns, held by the two parties so lately hostile, kept up the attitude of war, and the king, in the disordered state of his finances, being unable to pay his troops or officers, these persisted in war as a means of livelihood. The Huguenots were not slow to follow the example. They seized Mende. Biron, governor of Guyenne, having had a personal quarrel with the King of Navarre, continued to harass and provoke him. Catherine visited the province, and appeased for the moment the rising feuds by her presence; but, at her departure, animosities and hostilities recommenced. In addition to so many rivalries, came to be added that of the two courts, the gay one of Navarre, in which Queen Margaret and her ladies presided, and that of Henry, in which the minions predominated. Margaret had always preferred her brother Anjou, whom she aided to escape when arrested through the jealous fears of the king. The latter had taken mean revenge by denouncing some of the amours of his sister to her husband. The Bearnais divulged the treason to the parties inculpated, and the little court of Nerac vowed revenge.

It stirred up Henry of Navarre to declare war in 1580. Pretexts were not wanting on both sides. Henry drew up his in a solemn declaration; but, however true the grievances enumerated, great numbers of the Huguenots did not deem them sufficient to warrant a recurrence to arms. They showed little alacrity to obey the summons of their leader, and the campaign, which commenced in the pique of some court ladies, was called the *guerre des amoureux*.

The success of such a war did not answer the expectations formed. The enterprises which were to inaugurate it, failed; and Henry of Navarre, in order to uphold his character as a general and a party chief,

CHAP. XXV.

undertook to capture Cahors. It was provided with a good garrison and a valiant commander. But Henry, nothing daunted, caused the gates to be blown open by petards, and rushing in, commenced a hand to hand fight, which lasted several days and nights. The Huguenots triumphed at length, through the indomitable courage of their leader, whose character was much ennobled by the feat. The war, however, terminated soon after, in the peace of Fleix (November 1580), on conditions little differing from those of Bergerac. The Prince of Condé, who had seized upon La Fere, in Picardy, protested against the pacification in vain.

In the Low Countries was offered the self-same mode of putting an end to civil and religious strife, by an union between the moderate men of both creeds, which the party of the *politiques* proposed and attempted in France. The horrors of war, of soldatesque barbarism and princely cruelty, had disgusted the Flemish Catholics, who came to a similar understanding with the Reformers that Damville had established in Languedoc with the Protestants. Had the Duke of Anjou been a man of honour and consistency, he might have become the head of such a party, for which the extreme line taken by the Prince of Orange unfitted him. But a Valois could not display moderation or prudence, nor could he inspire confidence in any. Even Queen Elizabeth, to whom he paid court, and who would have overlooked many defects, was compelled to trust John Casimir in preference to a son of Catherine of Medicis. Anjou's brief campaign of 1578, in the Netherlands, was as devoid of political talent as of military success. In 1580 the cause was in a worse plight. An able governor, the Prince of Parma, had rallied the moderate Catholics to his standard, and severed them from the Protestants, whom he proposed to reduce by all the wiles of diplomacy and the vigour of command. The Prince of Orange despaired of doing more than

hold his ground in Holland; and the Flemings again applied to Anjou, who then made greater efforts, and received more direct aid from France.* Catherine of Medicis was then preparing to contest the Portuguese succession with Philip the Second, and felt less delicacy in interfering in Flanders. At the commencement of 1581, Anjou led a brilliant army of 15,000 French against the Prince of Parma, who raised the siege of Cambray at his approach. Had he but followed up his advantage, and fought a battle for the cause, he would probably have won Flanders and the hand of Elizabeth. But returning to England without having made use of his splendid army, the queen could but send him back to repair his omission. He was subsequently elected Duke of Brabant in Antwerp. Instead of being contented with the authority thus conferred, and employing it against the Spanish enemy, Anjou plotted to surprise and get complete possession of the town (1583).† In this he failed, and withdrew from the Low Countries in disgrace, leaving the influence and the hopes of France to extend its sway over those countries for ever extinct. The unfortunate prince himself did not long survive. He expired at Château Thierry, in June 1584, leaving the feeble Henry the Third the sole male survivor of the House of Valois.

If the enterprises of this unfortunate prince in Flanders, and those of Marshal Strozzi to take possession of Portugal‡ on behalf of Catherine of Medicis, be passed over, as appertaining more to the history of these countries than that of France, there are few

* Alençon's letter to Des Pruneaux leaves no doubt of his having received aid and countenance from Henry. Bethune, 8860.

Granvelle was of the same opinion. He says in his intercepted letters, published at Antwerp, that Anjou did not take a step without the concurrence of his mother and brother. Letter to Morillon, 1582. See also Lettres de Busbec in Archives Curieuses, 51, t. x.

† For events of Antwerp see MSS. Dupuy, 744.

‡ For Strozzi's expedition see MSS. Dupuy, 87.

CHAP. XXV.

public events to record of the reign of Henry the Third during the four years which elapsed between the Treaty of Fleix and his brother's death. The failure of Henry of Navarre's campaign kept him quiet; and the Duke of Guise wisely saw that Henry the Third, left undisturbed to his own devices or vices, would do more to augment his unpopularity, and exhaust the influence and respect which he possessed as king, than his enemies could achieve by the most active hostility. Freed for a brief interval from care, the monarch gave himself up to alternate asceticism and dissolute seclusion and debauch, and to favouritism still more lavish than had even marked the first years of his reign. On the new objects of his predilection Henry conferred the first offices of the state. Joyeuse, one of them, was created admiral; La Valette, the other, was made Duke of Epernon, and given the command of the French infantry. The former espoused the queen's sister, with a dowry of 300,000 crowns. Epernon was to marry the other sister. Seats were allowed them at the royal table, and precedence even given them over other dukes.* There was some spark of policy in this exorbitant preference. Joyeuse and Epernon were men of energy and courage, and the latter at least possessor of talents and resolution. Raised to these high dignities, they might be made governors of provinces; posts filled at the time by grandees, who kept to themselves the revenues and the power, and paid but scant allegiance or respect to the monarch.

Henry's only financial revenue seemed, indeed, to have been the mulcting of the inhabitants of Paris, or the neighbouring towns within his grasp. He was in a continual quarrel with his parliament, forcing them to sanction financial edicts, which he could only

* Neufville's letter, MSS. Bethune, 8888.

enforce with the sword. He levied compulsory loans on magistrates, functionaries, and notable citizens; and was continually creating new offices for the sake of the money which their sale produced. From the clergy he wrung decime after decime, and was wont to seize, on the most trifling pretexts, the money furnished by the Church for the payment of the interests on the city debt. He thus made enemies of every class and profession, especially in the capital, who looked to the Duke of Guise as the only powerful personage that could check or put down so rapacious and imbecile a prince. Guise sedulously flattered the hopes thus entertained of him, and made use of them to form a secret league of the Parisians against the king. The more respectable citizens, indeed, shrunk from the treasonable association, which formed as a pretext, and assumed as an aim, the protection and defence of Papal and Catholic religion against heretics, and against the monarch who favoured or treated with them. This was the ready mode, not only of exciting the passions and ensuring the support of the lower class of Parisians, but it procured annual subsidies and promises of support from Rome and from Philip. But though sedulous in organising, Guise, warned by the failure of the former League, delayed an explosion until the sinking health of the Duke of Anjou, opening the succession to the King of Navarre, afforded the grand pretext of standing up in arms against a Huguenot heir.

The serious results likely to arise from such an event were universally foreseen. Before it occurred, Henry the Third sent Joyeuse to the King of Navarre to entreat him to remove all difficulties by once more conforming to Catholicism, and proposed proceeding to Languedoc for the sake of a personal interview.*

* Henry's instructions to Miron. MS. Bethune, 8923.

CHAP. XXV.

He, at the same time, used every diplomatic effort to dissuade the Pope from countenancing the renascent League.* It was not the first time that the future Henry the Fourth, since he was free, had received a mingled summons and advice to recant. Philip the Second once sent envoys to him to urge this, and to promise alliance with the Prince of Bearn, as he called the King of Navarre, in at once dethroning Henry the Third.† Though neither enthusiastic nor resolute in his religious tenets, the Bearnois declared that 'he could not change his creed as he did his *chemise*;' nor could he demean himself by making his religious profession the means of political advantage.

This offer of Philip the Second testifies the hatred which he bore the Valois. Never, indeed, was the malignity of this prince more active. Assassin after assassin was despatched from the European Old Man of the Mountain against Elizabeth and against the Prince of Orange. One of these, Salcedé, had, a year or two before, been commissioned to murder the Duke of Anjou; the deposition of the ruffian previous to his fearful execution seriously alarmed and perplexed Henry the Third.‡ When in the spring of 1584 it became known that the Duke of Anjou's illness was likely to terminate fatally, Guise, under Spanish orders, held meetings of his friends and family at Bassompierre near Nancy, and there arranged the preliminaries for the resuscitation of the League. In June and July, the Spanish monarch had to record a double triumph; the Duke of Anjou expired, some say under the effects of poison, and, within a few weeks, the Prince of Orange fell under the hand of an assassin, whom Philip and the Prince of Parma had expressly employed. The latter

* The relations of the French court with the Popes are elucidated in the king's letters to St. Goard, preserved in the collection of M. Lucas Montigny. See the catalogue by Laverdet, 1860.

† Mémoires de Duplessis-Mornay.

‡ Discours Veritable of Salcede's crime, printed at Bruges, 1582.

immediately laid siege to Antwerp in order to put a finishing stroke to the cause of Reform in the Low Countries, and Guise resuscitated the League in a solemn meeting held at Joinville on the last day of 1584. The envoys of Spain and of the Cardinal of Bourbon were present. Here it was agreed that the extinction of heresy should be actively pursued in France and in Flanders. All Protestants pretending to the throne of France being set aside, the Cardinal of Bourbon was to be considered the legitimate heir, and he was to renew the conditions of the Treaty of Cateau Cambresis, and to execute the decrees of the council of Trent. He was to restore Cambray to Spain, and suffer no aid to reach the Flemish rebels from France; Philip in turn promising to support the League, by paying 600,000 crowns in six months, and 400,000 at the end of the year.*

In the same month (December 1584) was signed, at Magdeburg, a concordat, as it was called, between Queen Elizabeth, Henry of Navarre, the Prince of Condé, John Casimir, the Swiss, and the Rochellois, to maintain the French Edicts of Pacification, and summon Henry the Third to respect them. Elizabeth promised to furnish 12,000 English, 5000 reistres, and 4000 Swiss.

Thus were the great European parties of Spain and Rome, absolutism and ultra-Catholicism, ranged against the North of Europe, including England. Henry the Third received a summons from both to join them. The Flemings besought him once more to save them, and with them the independence of Europe. The Estates of Flanders offered to recognise him as their sovereign. Ashamed to refuse, Henry and Catherine affected difficulties, and were so preposterously exigent as to require Holland and Zealand as well as Flanders.

* MS. Bethune, 8860.

CHAP. XXV.

Well aware of the puissant enemies that menaced and paralysed them at home, they knew themselves to be in no condition to accept either the whole or the half sovereignty of the Low Countries. They merely sought to cover, by a decent pretext, their apparently pusillanimous refusal. The pretext was not given them; for the Estates of Ghent, and even those of Holland, offered themselves to the puny French monarch, sadly ignorant of his capabilities or his position. Elizabeth supported their demands, and backed them by the Order of the Garter. The latter was a welcome gift. But a crown to grasp and to defend surpassed his power, and the king publicly declined the proffer. Spain was more peremptory, and the Prince of Parma made an instant demand of Cambray. Catherine of Medicis thought to parry it by declaring it her own especial and private property.*

Spain and the leaguers did not wait for the conclusion of their mutual treaty to commence operations. On the 20th of August a pilgrim was captured with letters from Guise, with orders to his officers to seize Nantes, Brest, and St. Malo.† Tidings that the Rouergue, Quercy, and Auvergne were leagued, reached the court about the same time, Henry‡ sending La Foret to forbid them assembling. But the provinces and the leaguers were already up in arms, when the Cardinal of Bourbon, as heir presumptive to the crown, pub-

* Motley, United Netherlands, vol. i. close of c. iii., charges the French king and his mother with pusillanimity for declining so magnificent an offer. But these or similar proposals were not made for the first time, nor was it the first time that Catherine or one or other of her sons had listened to them; but events had proved the utter incapacity of French princes or of the French monarchy taking advantage of them. It could only be done by a frank alliance with England and the Huguenots, and with the cordial aid of the former power. But there was no counting upon Elizabeth to aid the French sincerely in Flemish conquests, and what the Huguenots were unable to effect twelve years before, they were still less able to accomplish then.

† MSS. Colbert, 9. Henry's letter.

‡ MSS. Bethune, 8859.

lished his manifesto at Peronne, detailing the causes which prompted him and his party to take arms.*

The reasons assigned for the Cardinal of Bourbon raising a standard hostile to the Government, was the speedy extinction of the House of Valois; the pretensions of a Huguenot prince to succeed to the throne; and the necessary oppression, in consequence, of the Catholic religion. At such a crisis the king, instead of trusting the national noblesse, advanced new men to power who were ready to favour the Huguenot prince, and, in so doing, wrong every class in the State. To prevent such evils, the Cardinal of Bourbon had leagued with the Pope, the King of Spain, the Princes of the House of Austria, the Republics of Venice and Genoa, the Grand Duke of Florence, the Houses of Lorraine, of Savoy, of Nevers, of Cleves, of Nemours, the Bishops of Cologne and Mayence, all of whom agreed to maintain the Papal religion in France, to restore to the noblesse its privileges, to abolish all new taxes, give parliaments their rights, and see that the states-general should henceforth be freely held.

No doubt there was in this an apparent respect of popular opinion. But at the very time, and for many years previous, a slow system of persecution had been directed against the Protestants, and even against those who favoured them, forbidding their books, and excluding them from municipal authority, and even from residence; so much so, that those professing the reformed religion were obliged either to abandon their belief or return to those towns or districts where their creed exclusively prevailed. The only way of resisting and remedying this was war—war carried on as it was at a later period in Germany, until such time as the Roman Catholics could be brought by necessity to fair toleration. But toleration at so early a period as this could only have been observed

* Mémoires de la Ligue.

CHAP. XXV.

by sects living apart in different provinces and districts, thus avoiding mutual irritation and inspiring mutual awe. This, however, was no less than a division of the kingdom, and a destruction of its unity and strength, to which, indeed, the treaty of *Monsieur* palpably led. These necessities and results begat a political hatred of Protestantism in the breasts of men who were patriotic Frenchmen and zealous loyalists. Did such a sentiment animate the Duke of Guise, he would command our respect. But he evidently cared little for the unity of France or the dignity of its crown, aiming rather at the suppression of both, and the substitution of separate principalities, probably under the suzerainty of Spain. He was an iracund and energetic man, but with no large or definite views as a politician. And one indeed is not sorry to perceive that those who adopted assassination as licit and even honourable, were, like Philip the Second and Guise, men of narrow intellect and low views.*

The commands of the Duke of Guise were now obeyed by many more discontented and more honest than himself; men who looked upon the Huguenots as the disturbers of political and religious order, whose continued existence was incompatible with the unity, with the greatness and prosperity, of the country. The Protestants, no longer objects of interest to the Catholic population, for they were no longer burned at the stake, rendered themselves abhorred by retaliating the cruelties inflicted formerly on them. They had no longer either the monopoly of teaching or of preaching. The Jesuits had sprung up, and insinuated themselves and their establishments everywhere, denouncing the weakness, the variations, and squabbles of the reformers,

* In the numerous letters of Guise there is not to be found a single particle of talent,—not a scintilla of that mingled nobleness and sagacity which marked almost everything that fell from the mouth or pen of the King of Navarre.

their intolerance of the noblesse, of authority of all kinds, and as necessitating by their presence the continued exactions and devastations which civil war occasioned. The French of the north especially, and of Paris, came to look upon the Huguenots, as they had in years previous looked upon the English, as the arch-foe, without whose expulsion no peace or prosperity could be hoped for.*

The first answers of Henry the Third and of the King of Navarre to the manifesto of the League, were not so sincere, and consequently not so forcible, as they might have been. The King of Navarre said he was open to conviction on matters of religion. The King of France asserted he yet might have peace, and if he had tolerated the Protestants it had been with the assent of the estates, and with a view to avoid civil war and prevent the concourse of foreign soldiers into the kingdom.

At the call of both parties. the whole kingdom rose, by far the most of its provinces for the League. The entire north, from the sea to the Vosges, with the exception of Metz and Boulogne, in both of which towns the Duke of Epernon held garrisons, hoisted the standard of Lorraine. Berry and Britanny followed the example; as did Lyons. Marseilles and Bordeaux, as well as Orleans, were preserved to the king by the vigilance of their governors. Chalons and Toulouse remained equally firm. The Duke of Montpensier preserved Poitou. The project of the Duke of Mayenne for creating an insurrection in Paris failed also for the present.†

But notwithstanding the loyalty of a few provinces and towns, the League was evidently the stronger party,

* The pamphlets of Duplessis-Mornay against the ambition and intrigues of the Guises were very able and crushing, but they did not meet the objections of the disinterested and loyal Catholics.

† Mémoires de Nevers, Mémoires de la Ligue.

CHAP. XXV.

and the court could not but yield. Catherine undertook to negotiate with this view, and proceeded to Epernay* to confer with the Guises. Their demands were exorbitant. They required the king to proscribe Protestantism altogether, and exile those who professed it. Even this Catherine was under the necessity of granting. It implied no less than that war should be levied upon the King of Navarre and his party, the League demanding the conduct of it. Catherine claimed this for the king. The League then insisted on places of surety,—on Guise getting Metz, Bourbon, Rouen, in fact taking military possession of the kingdom. Catherine objected, insinuated, pleaded,—the leaguers retarding the negotiations till they could get their foreign troops in order to impose better terms,—and made the best bargain for Henry, which was arranged in the Treaty of Nemours. By it the king proscribed the Reformed worship and its ministers, and exiled all who professed it, allowing them merely to sell their movable property. Catherine ceded far less than was demanded in places of surety. Bourbon had Soissons in lieu of Rouen, Guise instead of Metz got Thoul, St. Dizier, and Chalons without the permission to garrison it. Mercœur, who wanted Nantes, got Dinant and Conquet. The magnates of the League were confirmed in their provinces. But where Catherine's ability chiefly triumphed, was in the conduct of the war, which she succeeded in retaining for the king.

A circumstance which had rendered the leaguers less peremptory and exigent towards the close of the negotiations with Catherine, was the death of their constant friend Pope Gregory. He was succeeded by Sixtus Quintus, whose competitors Henry's agents had been influential in opposing, and whom the king

* April 16th, 1585; for what follows see her letters, and those of her secretary, in MSS. Bethune, 8873–4 and 8906. No. 8839 contains the leaguers' account of the negotiations.

laboured from the very first to conciliate by all the address and all the means in his power.* The new Pope accordingly hesitated to sanction or renew all that his predecessor had promised to the League. He urged them to observe their allegiance to the king, and this change staggered the Duke of Nevers and other least warm fanatics. As Henry continued zealously to conduct the war against the Huguenots, the Pope granted him bulls for the sale of church property, which brought in 360,000 crowns. The king fulfilled the conditions of the treaty, revoking previous tolerance, and issuing the decree which summoned the Protestants, princes and people, to recant or quit the kingdom. This edict of Reunion, as it was called, he solemnly went to register in full parliament. The King of Navarre replied with dignity and force to these edicts, so apparently outrageous and so contradictory with Henry's recent offers and letters. Condé and Montmorency joined with the Huguenot prince in this manifesto, the chiefs of the party of the *politiques* thus taking a decided stand against the leaguers. The king still sought to negotiate with Navarre, but a bull of excommunication and deposition against him and against Condé, wrung from Pope Sixtus by Spain and the leaguers, rendered negotiation impossible. The bull was answered with humorous audacity by the Huguenot prince. Meantime Henry had the adroitness to keep Guise in Lorraine† with the mission of preventing the German Protestants from invading France, and Joyeuse was given the command of the army to be employed in Poitou against the Huguenots.

The King of Navarre saw from the first his inability to cope with the enemies which the League could bring

* His letter to Pisani in Rome. Collections of Lucas Montigny.

† Letter of Henry, July, 1585, to Catherine and to the king. Lettres Missives, t. ii. p. 89.

CHAP. XXV.

into the field, with the subsidies of the Pope and of Spain. He declined the struggle, garrisoned his towns, and remained altogether on the defensive, until such time as Elizabeth could afford him succour, and the German Protestants march to his assistance. The Prince of Condé did not approve of such tactics. He was for taking the field at once, like his father, and engaging in offensive operations. In pursuance of this opinion he took the field, routed the Duke of Mercœur, who opposed him, and then laid siege to Brouage with the force that the Protestants of Poitou and the people of La Rochelle could furnish him. Could he have remained constant to this enterprise, he might have succeeded, which would have been important to his cause and to himself, as the Rochellois would have repaid him, if conqueror, by implicit confidence; but whilst engaged in this siege, Condé learned that the castle of Angers had fallen into the hands of a chief who declared that he held it for the Huguenots. The prince inconsiderately resolved at once to quit the siege of Brouage, and march to the occupation of Angers. In vain did some prudent officers dissuade him from so distant an expedition, not only to, but across the Loire, the enemy being in force upon that river, and certain not merely to attack, but intercept him. Condé seems to have been actuated chiefly by a wish to rival the King of Navarre, and especially his hazardous capture of Cahors. By the time he arrived at Angers, the castle was already in the possession of the Catholics, yet he vainly attacked the suburbs. Even then he refused to retreat, and marched apparently without purpose, and certainly without discretion, in the direction of Vendome. Condé's troops, disheartened by his rashness and incapacity, forsook him by degrees, each providing for his own safety. His army altogether dispersed; and, fortunately, both he himself and his chief followers escaped without capture. It was, however, a great triumph for the

leaguers and the royalists united, who hoped, in the following campaign of 1586, to get as completely the better of Navarre as they had done of Condé.*

The hopes of the reformers were, indeed, brought so low by this defeat of the prince, that even those of the royalist generals who did not press them before, now came forward to give them a final blow. The Maréchal de Matignon determined to carry the war into Guyenne, whilst the Duke of Mayenne undertook to reduce the fortresses north of the Garonne. The King of Navarre, to defeat this project, resolved to proceed to La Rochelle, so as to stir up serious war in that quarter, and thus divert Matignon and Mayenne from their purpose. To execute this it was necessary for him to pass the Garonne, which the troops of the duke and marshal beset. The king succeeded, with his usual audacity and good fortune, as Sully has recounted†, in reaching La Rochelle. There, in concert with Condé, who had returned with some supplies from England, he entrenched himself, in the mean time, near the sea coast, and thus contrived to hold his ground in Poitou. But plague and famine did more for the Huguenots in these campaigns than even the gallantry and manœuvres of their chief. Some towns of importance Mayenne feared to attack, lest his army should find the plague in the conquered place. St. Jean d'Angely was one of these. Mayenne took Chatillon. But, wanting that purpose and spirited lead which captivates a soldier, and at the same time without supplies, which the court was unable to send, "his army disbanded and broke up"‡ for the season. In other parts of France, at Auxonne and in Provence, the Huguenot generals, especially Lesdiguières, gained signal advantages.

The bad success of the campaign of 1586 gave Cathe-

* Mémoires de la Ligue, D'Aubigné, De Sully, et Hist. de De Thou.

† Sully.. Mémoires, chap. xx.

‡ Letter to Epernon, copied in Fontanieu, f. 368.

CHAP. XXV.

rine the opportunity to interfere. With some difficulty* she induced the King of Navarre to consent to a meeting, which took place in December, at Cognac. The encounter of their wits has been preserved.† The queen began by asking what Henry desired. "Nothing that I see here," was the reply of the monarch, as he surveyed the ladies who accompanied Catherine. As he remained obstinately silent, the queen asked if he was determined to prolong the ruin and misery of the kingdom. "Be it ruined, as you will, Madame, I shall always be able to keep my little corner of it."—"Will you not obey the king?" "For the last eighteen months I have ceased to obey him."—"How say you, my son?" "Madame, the king, who ought to be a father to me, has made war upon me like a wolf, yea, has fought me like a lion."—"These are mere words," said Catherine, "surely you will never allow me to lose all my time and trouble in coming here!" "Alas, Madame, I am not the cause of your trouble; I do not prevent you sleeping in your bed. It is you who keep me from reposing in mine. You feed on trouble and agitation; you could not live without it."—"How you are changed; you used to be good and tractable." "'Tis true; the way I have been treated has changed my character." —"Let us, at any rate, make a truce." "As you will." —"You 'll get no reistres from Germany, I promise you." "Madame, it is not from you that I come to seek information."

The king and his mother were both piqued by the obstinacy of the King of Navarre, their public negotiations with whom brought upon them the obloquy of Rome and of the Catholics; whilst that prince, refusing even to mention, much less accept, terms, looked merely to obtain German succours, and thus reduce the court to accept his conditions. Henry the Third, therefore,

* Her letter of October to Cheverny from Chenonceaux. Bethune, 8715.

† MSS. Dupuy, 317.

exerted himself to muster an army capable of obstructing his junction with the Germans. He issued orders for the gendarmerie to assemble; summoned the Parisians and the provincial towns to amass supplies; obtained a bull for raising money on church property; seized upon three-fourths of the confiscated property of the Huguenots*; and again commanding Guise and Mayenne to defend Champagne and Burgundy, entrusted to Joyeuse the army which was to combat the King of Navarre in Poitou. It was late in the summer, however, ere the Germans were ready, and the King of Navarre remained at La Rochelle; Joyeuse, whose orders were exclusively to watch him, could accomplish little save the capture of a few towns. These he sacked and most cruelly treated, in order to provoke Navarre, or to manifest his zeal; for Joyeuse came forward as a zealous partisan of the Church and of the League, and sought to be friendly with the Guises. He thus not a little annoyed and estranged the king, and even seized an interval to repair to Paris, where he was better received by the League and the fanatic citizens than by the monarch himself. The latter, however, gave him permission to fight a battle, and the courtiers all flocked back with him to the seat of war, in order to share in the honour of the triumph.

During the absence at court of the commander opposed to him, the King of Navarre had left La Rochelle and advanced to the Loire, driving the Catholics before him. One of his objects was to receive the Count of Soissons, brother of Condé, who was escaping from the court and the League to join the Huguenots, and who, at the same time, was bringing a supply of money from Queen Elizabeth.† When on the Loire, the plan was mooted of marching straight to join the Germans as they advanced across Lorraine. But the return of Joyeuse with large reinforcements, and the news that

* Vie de Nicholas Pithou, MSS.

† Walsingham's letters to Burleigh, Sep. 12, 1587.

CHAP. XXV.

Guise had mustered a large army in Champagne, made the Huguenot prince resolve to imitate the march of Coligny, who went round by Gascony and Languedoc to meet the auxiliary army which he expected from Germany.* It was Joyeuse's charge, both from the king and the League, to prevent this; and whilst the Huguenots mustered at St. Jean d'Angely, Henry the Third's lieutenant ordered the gendarmes and Catholic gentry of the surrounding provinces to join him at Ruffec. Both armies being completed, in the middle of September, marched parallel with each other towards the Dordogne, Joyeuse with the intention of seizing upon the Castle of Coutras, situated at the junction of two rivers, the Isle and the Drome, not far from where they both unite with the Dordogne. At Coutras, Joyeuse would have been well posted to prevent Navarre crossing either of these two rivers, or the Dordogne itself. But as the Albanian light horse of Joyeuse entered Coutras on the evening of the 19th September 1587, the light cavalry of the enemy appeared in line, to drive them back and defeat their purpose. Joyeuse, who was at Chalais, on learning this, gave orders to his troops to march at midnight. He had 8000 arquebusiers, a large body of gendarmes, and all the Catholic country gentry in their feudal array. The King of Navarre had but 4000 arquebusiers and 2000 horse. It was proposed to him to retreat, the enemy being so superior in number, but Henry resolved to fight. He knew Coutras well, the castle having been his frequent residence. In a wood adjoining it, which sunk down to the plain and was intrenched, Henry placed the greater part of his arquebusiers, and divided his horse into four squadrons, some sixty paces distant from each other. Joyeuse, in delight that the enemy awaited him, gathered together four hundred of his bravest and most attached cavaliers,

* Duplessis-Mornay

CHAP. XXV.

and made the rest extend in double line on either side, flanking them by his infantry in two bodies. At the moment the Huguenot pastors gave forth the well-known psalm of *This is the long desired day*, repeating which each soldier in the army bent his knee, "They are afraid, they confess!" exclaimed some of the royalists. The more experienced observed that, on the contrary, the Huguenot prayer was the sign of determined resistance. The battle was opened by the King of Navarre's artillery, which was well served, while that of Joyeuse was masked by a hillock and prevented from replying with effect. At last, one of his best commanders, St. Sulpice, being killed by a cannon shot*; and his ranks thinned, Joyeuse gave orders to charge, and advanced himself with his whole line. The arquebusiers of Navarre were commanded to direct their fire on the central mass as they advanced, and it was fatal; the horse of Joyeuse being shot and many of his followers' horses wounded. At the same time the Huguenots charged in squadrons against the Catholics as they advanced in line, so that the latter were easily broken. The long lances of Catholic gendarmes were of no effect. And after an hour's intermingled and hand to hand fight, Joyeuse's army was destroyed, he himself, his brother, and the greater part of his officers and nobles having perished.†

The King of Navarre displayed at Coutras all the brilliant qualities of the general, as of the soldier, signalising himself in several personal encounters, and telling the princes of the house of Condé and of Soissons, "he would show them that he was their elder." But most of the results of the victory both to his character and his cause, were thrown away by his lightness of

* Discours de la Defaite de Joyeuse. MS. Dupuy, 317, f. 33.

† D'Aubigné, Sully, Duplessis-Mornay, De Thou, Mathieu, Relations de la bataille de Coutras in Cimber and Danjou Archives. Ried de Fer's letter, giving an account of it in MS. Dupuy, 87, fol. 231.

CHAP. XXV.

purpose. Difficulties and jealousies no doubt arose. His army was disposed to disband, as all armies of the day were after victory. The Prince of Condé was jealous and anxious to set up an independent command, and, being supported by the Counts of Turenne and La Tremouille, they separated their troops from the King of Navarre.* Disgusted with this, and seeing the impossibility of pursuing his march to join the Germans, Henry gathered the standards which had been taken from the enemy, and hurried off to lay them at the feet of his mistress, the Duchess of Grammont, in the distant province of Béarn.†

The Duke of Guise was far more active to redeem the defeat of the Catholics, than Henry to profit by Protestant victory. The German army under the Duke of Bouillon and Count D'Ohna marched through Champagne by Chaumont and Chatillon. They were more uncertain in their movements from the circumstance of an officer whom they had sent to Henry, having been shot whilst delivering, but ere he had finished, the message which he brought. Henry the Third, not willing to give too large an army to Guise, took himself the command of the forces, which he led to the Loire; whilst the Germans approached that river to effect the passage over it, which the Huguenots had promised to facilitate.

Instead of a Huguenot army, an envoy from the King of Navarre arrived with excuses. And the Germans, finding neither an open bridge nor a friendly army at La Charité, as they were led to expect, encountered the royal forces in occupation of the town. They accordingly turned north towards Gien.‡ The court was in terror lest they should march on Paris, and Henry knew not whether to direct his army to

* Sully.
† D'Aubigné.
‡ Henry's letter to Nevers, Oct. 15th. His correspondence, MSS. Bethune.

protect the capital or defend the Loire.* From this dilemma he was rescued by an officer of the name of Depau, who had been an agent of the King of Navarre, and who was in consequence trusted by the German leader. Guise suborned this man to persuade the Germans that Montargis would be easy of capture, the garrison being favourable and inclined to surrender it. The Germans were therefore induced to make unguarded approach; and in the marshes near it, at Vimori, they were surprised by Guise (October 26), losing what they most prized, a quantity of their baggage.† Repulsed at Montargis they advanced to Château Dun, took it, and then directed their march past Etampes, in order to join the prince. This aimless and dangerous march into the centre of France between the armies of Guise and the king, caused disgust amongst the Swiss, who sent privately to Henry to make terms. Guise, aware of this, prepared another ambuscade for the Germans at Auneau. The governor of its castle made with them an agreement of neutrality whilst he admitted the troops of Guise within its walls. No sooner had the Germans on occupying the town dispersed to seek provisions, than the Guisards rushed forth upon them, and in their efforts to extricate themselves from the streets, they lost 1500 of their body, and most of their horses and guns. The Swiss took the opportunity to conclude the treaty and go over to the king. After which there was nothing left but a precipitate retreat for the Germans. Pursued to the Loire by the king's army and intercepted by the Governor of Lyons, Mandelot, they capitulated on condition of being allowed to return home, promising never to enter France as invaders. The Duke of Bouillon escaped to Geneva.‡

The defeat of the Germans by the Duke of Guise

* Avis de Nevers. MSS. de Mesmes, 5, 8777.

† Dutillet's letter from Montargis. MSS. Bethune, 8899.

‡ Davila, De Thou, Mém. de la Ligue. Campagne des Reitres, par La Chastre.

CHAP. XXV.

procured him as small immediate advantage as the victory of Coutras had brought Henry of Navarre. The king assumed all the credit of the campaign for himself or his favourite Epernon, to whom he transferred all the honours of Joyeuse, creating him admiral, and Governor of Normandy. Guise was forbidden to accompany Henry's triumphant entrance into the capital, during which the citizens saluted him with the biblical chorus of Saul having slain his thousands, but David his ten thousands. The Duke of Aumale was dismissed to his government of Picardy, and Mayenne to Burgundy, where he was soon after bidden to disband his regiment.

This mode of frustrating the Guises of all which they might have expected from their recent reconciliation with the court, and from the services they had rendered in the campaign, could not but arouse their disaffection. They soon manifested it, Guise by attacking the Duke of Bouillon and by laying siege to Jametz, and by the Duc d'Aumale making an attempt upon Boulogne. They also summoned a meeting of the League at Nancy (January 1588), from whence they transmitted arrogant and imperative demands to court. They found there a new ally in Catherine, who had become jealous of the Duke of Epernon's influence with the king, and who blamed the rashness which was the consequence. Fully cognisant of the power and influence of the house of Lorraine, she did not think it could with impunity be set aside. She had moreover assurance from Guise that his purpose was not to dethrone or offer violence to Henry, but merely to force himself upon the monarch as his minister, who, like Montmorency under Henry the Second, should wield administrative and military power.* Catherine beheld her son the tool of every favourite or courtier, and she came to consider it more desirable that Guise

* Archbishop of Lyons's advice to Guise on his return to Court. MSS. Colbert, tom. xvi.

should exercise that power than Epernon. When the latter therefore advised strong measures, such as the exile of the Duchess of Montpensier, and the introduction of the Swiss into the capital, Catherine opposed him and was seconded by Villequier, who also had weight with the king, and who was in understanding with Guise. Poulain, the provost-lieutenant, admitted at this time to all the councils of the League in Paris, betrayed them to the king, and pointed out to him several opportunities to seize the conspirators and crush them, found all his advice counteracted by Catherine and by Villequier. The ever-crafty queen, whose power it was the chief aim of the League to overthrow, first betrayed the Huguenots to them on the memorable night of St. Bartholomew, and now betrayed her son, the monarch for whose uncontrolled authority she had laboured and intrigued and perilled so much.

Had Henry in all things followed the conciliatory counsels of his mother, it would have been better, for he might at least have mollified his foe. But he took precautions and made preparations for energetic measures, which, though he hesitated to proceed with then, still alarmed the Parisian League. He had a sufficient number of troops, upwards of 6000, partly Swiss, whom he stationed in the vicinity of Paris, bringing them at times into the suburbs, and even detachments of them into the Louvre and the strongholds of the city. Whenever he took the latter step, for the sake of defeating some plot of the leaguers, or of the Duchess of Montpensier, they feared and exclaimed that he was going to take vengeance upon them, and secretly importuned Guise to come, in order to protect and lead them. The duke did not wish to precipitate a breach, hoping that the king's fears and Catherine's prudence would induce them to submit to his authority. To provide for the worst, however, he sent officers to Paris, directed the citizens to reduce the sixteen districts to the number of seven, to appoint

CHAP. XXV.

a colonel for each, to keep up their organisation and be ready for resistance.

The king, made fully aware of the preparations of his enemies, expostulated with Guise, and supplicated the Pope to use his influence to prevent a catastrophe, which would inevitably occasion a civil war between the Catholics.* But Guise had gone too far to retreat. His partisans in Paris, menaced by the king and his Swiss, clamoured for his presence; and Spain, through his ambassador, urged him to act.† Hence, notwithstanding large offers of favour and consideration from the king, and injunctions that he should not repair to the capital, Guise made his appearance there on the 9th of May, 1588. He brought but scant escort; the concourse and the acclamations of the people fully supplying the absence of troops. His demeanour was humble, however; for, although the Parisian leaguers aimed at nothing less than dethroning and tonsuring the king, Guise, who knew that the capital alone could not confer a crown, and that he would awaken more jealousy than acquire strength by open usurpation, restricted his ambition to the reality of power, rather than to its dignity or title. But the age was not ripe for a Richelieu to govern in the name of a Louis, and King Henry the Third, however effeminate, could not reconcile himself to play the part of a *roi fainéant*, especially in the hands of a chief like Guise, whom no scruple arrested and no murder appalled.

Guise at first repaired to the residence of the queen mother, and went with her to the Louvre. Henry,

* Henry's letter to his envoy in Rome, of April and May, 1588. Lucas de Montigny's collection. See also St. Goard's letters. MSS. de St. Germains' Harlay, 288, 9.

† Michelet supposes that Spain not only impelled Guise, but precipitated the insurrection of the barricades, through its agents, independent of and even against the will of Guise, in order to prevent French parties from interfering with the Spanish expedition against England. See MSS. de Mesmes, Mem. de la Ligue, t. iii. MS. Fontanieu, 377, 8, and MSS. Bethune.

alarmed and irritated by the intrusion, is said to have at first meditated making away with his audacious visitor. He was induced at least to postpone the design. "What brings you?" was the monarch's first and natural demand. "To offer to your majesty my service," said Guise, "in calming the emotion of the city, and in entreating your confidence in my fidelity." "I charged you not to come to Paris at a time of such disturbance and danger." "I did not understand that my coming would be disagreeable to your majesty," answered Guise. Henry observed, that the result would test the sincerity of these professions.*

The duke evidently failed in his design of intimidating the king, who, he also saw, was prepared to proceed to all lengths against him rather than succumb. Whilst the monarch, therefore, summoned troops to him, and arranged the means to seize the chief malcontents, these, rallying around Guise at his hotel, concocted their plans of resistance. Meetings and conversations between the king and duke led to no result. On the morning of the 12th, Henry, having mustered during the night such of the civic guard as he considered faithful to him, ordered back into Paris† the Swiss and other troops, who took up positions in the square of the Hotel de Ville, of Notre Dame, and the Marché des Innocents, as well as on the bridges. It was some citizens and magistrates favourable to him whom he named in command of the civic guard, and posted in the Marché des Innocents. Having assumed this imposing attitude, he sent injunctions to Guise to quit the capital. The duke replied to the queen mother, and to Secretary Bellievre charged with the message, in such a way as to gain time. His emissaries were

* Cayet, Chronologie Novenaire, and accounts published in Cimber and Danjou. Archives curieuses, vol. ii.

† They had already entered on the 8th, but had been withdrawn. Henry's letter of the 8th to M. de Rambouillet.

CHAP. XXV.

arousing the citizens to resistance, and his chief followers were taking the direction of the bands of the different quarters. Brisson especially undertook to defend that of the university, and gave orders to fortify the Place Maubert against Crillon, who threatened to advance with the Swiss from the bridge to take it. He was stopped by an entrenchment, hastily thrown up in the Carrefour St. Severin. The first barricade was, however, erected by the inhabitants of the Rue Neuve Notre Dame, who stretched their chains across the street to keep out the Swiss, and who, to strengthen the chains, piled barrels behind them, which they filled with sand and paving-stones. This traditional mode of resisting soldiers in Paris was again universally recurred to; and barricades were erected at the head of all the streets around and facing the position of the royal troops.

In a short time those behind the barricades began to fire on the troops, who do not seem to have had any artillery. And it was soon evident that if the soldiers did not attack and carry the barricades, they must withdraw. The feat was deemed impossible, and the Swiss especially began to deprecate the fury of their assailants by declaring themselves good Christians, and demanding quarter. The officers found it necessary to withdraw them. They attempted to seize the Chatelet and defend it. But the attempt failed, and about fifty Swiss were slain. A panic seized the other companies, and several of them, surrounded in their position by the people, surrendered. The king at the same time gave orders for the withdrawal of the troops, and summoned Guise to appease the tumult which he had caused. Notwithstanding his observation that bulls let loose were not so easily reduced to harmlessness, Guise quitted his hotel towards five o'clock, and with merely a stick in his hand, went round the different quarters tranquillising the mob and rescuing the

soldiers from their fury. Several of the duke's officers besought him to lead them against the Louvre, whilst the populace shouted "To Rheims," whither they proposed bringing Guise to be crowned. But the latter, deeming the monarch now at last subdued, was anxious for an accommodation, and listened patiently to the queen mother, who had caused herself to be carried over the barricades to demand terms for her son. Guise imposed the hardest conditions. He demanded the lieutenant-generalship for himself, the command of the war against the King of Navarre, and the forfeiture of the succession by the Bourbons, the exile from court of the king's friends, and the dismissal of his guard. The chief governorships and fortresses were to be distributed amongst the eminent men of the League, and the states-general were to be summoned at Paris to legalise this revolution. Negotiations continued during the night of the 12th and the morning of the following day, the leaguers investing the Louvre more closely, and betraying intentions more and more hostile. Catherine warned the king that there was no hope of obtaining better conditions, and Henry accordingly, taking a cane in his hand, quitted the Louvre as if for a walk in the gardens of the Tuileries. The court stables were attached to this palace, and the king, mounting his horse and rallying about sixty of his friends, rode off from the capital, and succeeded in reaching Chartres.*

Little moved by the king's escape, which he had taken few pains to prevent, Guise proceeded to reduce the Bastille, Vincennes, and the other fortresses in and around the capital. Deposing all the authorities who were in the interest of the king, he caused a new

* Mémoire de Cheverny, Hist. des Barricades par un Bourgeois de Paris. The same by St. Yon, L'Estoile, De Thou, Davila, Lettres de Pasquier, Mémoires de la Ligue, printed; Mém de la Ligue, MSS. de Mesmes, Bouillé, Ducs de Guise, &c.

CHAP. XXV.

municipality to be elected, and proceeded to the parliament to demand of the judicial body sanction for his proceedings. The chief judge or premier-president, Achille de Harlay, instead of acceding to such a demand, took the opportunity to warn Guise of the heavy responsibility which he assumed, and the total want of right that marked his usurpation.* The English ambassador, Lord Stafford, to whom Brissac went to offer Guise's protection, spurned it, and refused to recognise any authority save that of the king. The Duchess of Montpensier installed herself in the hotel of the Montmorency, and when reproached by the queen mother, excused herself with the natural elation of victory. Catherine's remaining in Paris was a pledge to Guise of Henry's pacific intentions, and an assurance that the court meditated negotiations, not war. The words, the missives, and declarations of the duke were couched in the humblest and mildest forms. And whilst the populace shouted for him to proceed to Rheims to be crowned, he professed himself the king's faithful subject, merely anxious for the Catholic religion, and to drive from around the monarch those who favoured and intrigued with the Huguenots. The Duke of Epernon was here pointed at and marked for proscription. This favourite hastened to the king at Chartres, on learning that he had fled thither, and used every persuasion to induce Henry to act a manly part, summon his loyal subjects about him, make use of the towns which came forward with offers of support, come to some accord with the King of Navarre, and face his enemies in the field. Guise, to be prepared for such a contingency, appealed to the Prince of Parma for 6000 lansquenets, and bade his brothers strengthen themselves in their governments. The Duke of Lorraine pressed the siege of Jametz; Mayenne fortified himself

* "The Judges sit on the fleurs de lis, and will remain faithful to them."

in Dijon. The Cardinal of Guise, establishing himself at Troyes, levied the royal taxes through the eastern provinces. Henry rejected the council of Epernon, whom he bade to resign Normandy and even Angoulême. The monarch's resolution was taken. It was to treat Guise as Charles the Ninth had lured Coligny, accept the terms, adopt his policy, counterfeit the extreme of confidence and friendship, in order the more readily to sacrifice his audacious rival.

Even before he came to any terms with the duke, Henry announced his intention of summoning the states-general of the kingdom to meet, not indeed at Paris, as the leaguers desired, but at Blois. Though prepared to make great concessions, he could not submit to the humiliating one of re-entering Paris, until the citizens made some amends for the offence and defeat inflicted on him. This obstructed Catherine's efforts at accommodation, and Henry, not finding himself in sufficient safety at Chartres, removed to Rouen, the castle of which was held by La Noue. As summer advanced, several circumstances rendered the Duke of Guise more tractable. The division between the king and duke, whilst the Huguenot held aloof from both, had emboldened the ambitious to turn the weakness of the government to their own profit. The Duke of Savoy occupied the marquisate of Saluzzo, and advanced into Dauphiné. Even the Pope, whose desire of sending an army into France had been rejected or frustrated by Henry, now prepared, under pretext of defending Avignon, to send forces and conquer provinces on the Rhone. The King of Spain too could offer less assistance than usual. He had made the stipulated advance to the League on learning the success of the barricades, but he could do no more, being for the time absorbed in the great enterprise of the Armada against England. When Villeroy, therefore, arrived with concessions from Henry, Guise accepted

CHAP. XXV.

them, and a treaty was concluded between them on the 15th of July.*

It was no other than the clauses and stipulations of the League which Henry signed under the altered name of the Catholic Union. He swore to maintain it, to extirpate heresy, to exclude Henry of Navarre and all Protestants from the succession, to admit none to any office whatever, and to consider as traitors all who refused to sign the said terms. The League not only took the towns they had secured by the former accord, but were to have Bourges, Orleans, and Montreuil on the death of the present governors. The king had consented to appoint Guise constable; but Catherine substituted for it the title of lieutenant-general, giving him power over all troops, except when the king was present. He agreed to form two armies, and entrust one to Mayenne. The other, which was to act against Navarre; he evidently intended to conduct himself in concert with Guise. There was a tedious negotiation respecting the submission of the capital and the re-establishment of the royal authority there.† Guise offered to give up the bastille and the arsenal, in hopes of inducing Henry to return to the Louvre. But the king, though he came as near as Nantes to Paris, turned off to Chartres. Guise himself, and the chief leaguers, as well as the Parisian authorities, repaired thither to pay their respects and induce Henry to return. Catherine joined her solicitations to those of Guise: and when Henry peremptorily refused, his mother complained how changed and harsh his nature had become. "Yes," observed Henry, smiling, "it is that fellow Epernon who has spoiled me." Though refusing to return to Paris, Henry received the leaguers amicably. He showed all the hostility they could desire to Epernon, whom he strove in vain to expel from

* Memoirs of Villeroy, of Nevers, &c.

† Mémoires de Nevers, t. i. p. 733. SS. de Mesmes, 8931, 5

Angoulême. He at the same time dismissed all his old counsellors and secretaries, as he had no longer need of any minister in his confidence; he no longer wanted counsellors to advise him. His sole want lay in those staunch fellows who could wield sword and dagger. Of these he had a body-guard of fifty-five, to whose service and presence he now exclusively trusted. Nor could Guise immediately demand their dismissal, which would seem as if he had a sinister design on the king's person.

What creates the greatest prejudice against the Duke of Guise in the minds of the readers of his history, is the fact, that whilst he was thus reducing his sovereign to a state of helplessness, he was not only confiding all his acts and plans to a foreign monarch, the King of Spain, but receiving his pay, and professing all attachment and allegiance to him. There can be little doubt, indeed, that the ulterior views of Guise extended to the crown. Villeroy has preserved the advice tendered to him by his intimate counsellor and friend, D'Epignac, Archbishop of Lyons, which was, that he should at first play merely the part of mayor of the palace, but still make use of that position to place, like Charles Martel, the crown upon his own head.* It was not probable that with these views he would have awaited the natural death of Henry. His present object, however, was to secure his power by means of the Estates, the members of which he had spared no efforts to have chosen and selected in his interest.

The Estates, consisting of upwards of 200 members of the commons, 100 nobles, and 134 of the clergy, assembled at Blois in October 1580; the dissidence between them and the king appearing from the very first. They were proceeding to elect their president

* MSS. Colbert, 16. Henry's Instructions to De Fresne, on sending him to Philip II., contains a full account of Guise's designs. MSS. Colbert, 30.

CHAP. XXV.

and officers, as well as to decide upon the validity of their own election, when Henry sought to interpose his authority. The Duke of Guise was mortified to learn, that not only the king, but the Pope, had extended pardon to the Count of Soissons, a brother of Condé's, who had commanded a squadron at Coutras, but who now abandoned Henry of Navarre, because that prince refused him his sister in marriage. Soissons, an orthodox Catholic, was in the succession to the throne, and might claim it, if the Huguenot princes, elder to him, were set aside. Guise saw in the restoration of Soissons a rival and an obstacle, and excited the commons to protest against this reception at Blois. But the nobles would not support such an outrage, and Guise was obliged to submit.

The sitting of the assembly was solemnly opened on the 16th of October, 1588.* The king, in his address, venturing to mention the league and association of the nobles as a thing that his generosity pardoned, Guise was as exasperated at the allusion as if he were the monarch and Henry the bold subject. He insisted on the obnoxious expression being expunged from the printed speech, and it was so. The clergy demanded that the monarch should swear once again in solemn assembly the edict of union, the proscription of the King of Navarre and the Protestants. Henry objected to the mistrust which this implied. Intolerance of any religion save the Roman might, he said, be erected into a fundamental law of the state; but treason against the royal person was no less so; and he proposed, simultaneous with the proscription of the Protestants, an oath to this effect for the league to take. But neither the duke nor the commons would consent.

The most effective mode of neutralising the royal power was to deny the king any revenue. Henry per-

* Etats Généraux, t. iv. Procès Verbal du Tiers Etat. The hall in which the assembly met still exists, with the king's private entrane.

sisted in placing the Duke of Nevers—who, though coquetting with the League, still held aloof from it—at the head of the army of Poitou. He asked the estates for funds to pay it, as well as the army of Mayenne; but they replied by claiming that the *taille* should be reduced to the rate levied in the reign of Louis the Twelfth; and they at the same time threw obstacles in the way of Henry's farming out the salt tax as usual. Not content with thus cutting off every source of revenue, the states insisted on establishing a court of justice to inquire into the king's past prodigality, and to punish the agents of it. At every indication of resistance by the monarch they threatened to separate.

Such extreme and unreasonable demands convinced the king that he had nothing to hope from the assembly or from Guise, and that he must expect little short of dethronement. He, therefore, turned his views to the only mode of self-defence left him, that of treating Guise as he himself had treated Coligny and the Huguenots in the festival of St. Bartholomew. Henry sought, at the same time, to make friends amongst the grandees. The Dukes of Nevers and Montpensier were in his interests; and the noblesse in general, though not prepared to break with the League, gave manifest symptoms that they considered the king too harshly treated, and that they would not sanction any further humiliation of the royal authority. They strongly disapproved, says Mathieu, of the outrage offered to the monarch in the barricades of Paris, and viewed with jealousy the independent spirit and newborn arrogance of the town and lower classes, in which Guise and the League came more and more to trust. Whilst the nobility was thus disposed, tidings arrived that the Duke of Savoy had invaded the marquisate of Saluzzo and taken Carmagnola. In an instant the war-spirit was alive. The nobles immediately declared for a military expedition against Savoy, and were for postponing the

CHAP. XXV.

civil war. Guise had the utmost difficulty in overcoming their determination.*

The duke, indeed, had made the same political fault which the Huguenots had done. In giving the preponderance in their party to the towns, to delegates and functionaries of the civic class, they had disgusted the nobility, and driven many of them from their cause. And now, the League, by its manifest reliance on the town population and their deputies in the estates, disgusted the nobles, many of whom protested with eloquence against it in the assembly at Blois.†

Nor was it merely the noblesse of birth which thus rallied to the royal cause, and displayed aversion to the seditious turbulence of the lower class. The nobility of the robe, as the French style the dignitaries of law and of the judgment-seat, boldly displayed the same sentiments. The example of Achille de Harlai, who maintained the king's authority against Guise, was not solitary. And at this time a meeting was held in Paris of the captains of the companies raised from the legal professions, who voted unanimously, that the first thing requisite was an accord with the king. ‡

It is remarkable that the Duke of Guise could not command the talents even of his own party. He had almost the selection of the states at Blois, he and his brother the cardinal, yet they brought not one man either of eloquence with the tongue or readiness with the pen. Even the hostile acts of the assembly against Henry were stupidly managed. In the writings and prints of the day the Huguenots had incontestably the advantage. There were none in the ranks of the League to compete with Duplessis-Mornay or Rosny. And yet there were not wanting men of high authority

* His letters, published by Bouillé.

† Etats Généraux.

‡ Registres de la Ville de Paris. MSS. Colbert, 252.

attached to the Catholic cause, such as Pasquier, if the Duke of Guise had known how to discover or make use of them. CHAP. XXV.

Montaigne himself was present at the estates of Blois. No one has expressed a stronger aversion for the license and contempt of authority shown by the Huguenots. No one was a more rigid Catholic in a political sense. He would allow no singing of psalms, no reading of the Bible, no inquiring or reasoning by the common herd. Ignorance was with him the proper state for a people, and the best foundation for religion. True, his religion, like that of augurs, though wholesome for others, was merely a source of derision for the better informed. Montaigne not only proclaimed this selfish and arrogant indifference to be his own mode of belief, but he declares such to have been the sentiments of the greater portion of the ultra-Catholics, "from whose whole army, if one was to cull those who entertained a sincere belief, you could not be able to complete a single company of gendarmes."

The commons, indeed, were attached to Guise and the League for the unlimited powers which they developed and favoured in the town municipalities, and the almost total exemption from taxation which he promised them. To hold out such hopes was nothing less than revolution, and would have embarrassed no government more than that of Guise himself, had he lived to establish one. But recklessness of the future and of all consequences, provided he humbled Henry the Third and dethroned the Bourbons, marked the policy of Guise.

The monarch was allowed no respite, and so evident and so great was his impatience and ill humour, that Guise was warned he would provoke some severe act of retaliation. At the same time the duke's own relatives seem to have deprecated his severity, and both Mayenne and Aumale are said to have interfered to

CHAP. XXV.

warn the king that they disapproved of the acts of their brother. Guise, early in December, demanded to be appointed constable, with the privilege of keeping a guard of archers round his person, for its security. He also insisted on being put in possession of Orleans. Henry was informed that the duke's ulterior project was to bring the court and estates to Paris, where he foresaw that he would be irrevocably a prisoner.*

The king was therefore driven in self-defence to the necessity of making away with his enemy. He first opened his design to Crillon, a noble of staunch loyalty. But that chief, whilst declaring his readiness to challenge Guise and fight him to the death, refused to be his assassin. Henry was therefore compelled to undertake the conduct of the enterprise himself, inferior instruments and agents being without difficulty to be found. He arranged the royal apartments to favour the design. The suite of rooms, which he occupied on the second floor over those in which the queen mother resided, consisted of a spacious hall, which was entered from the great staircase, and which, serving commonly as an ante-room and guard-room, was also used as a council chamber. Upon such occasions the guards were shut out and left on the staircase, or stowed away in other rooms. Next to this hall or council chamber, was the king's own cabinet or private room. Under the pretext of rendering it more private, the king caused the door into it from the hall to be blocked up, compelling those who visited him to make the round of several internal apartments and narrow passages through the hinder rooms, his bed-chamber being one of them. In an adjoining gallery he caused a number of little cells to be built for the purpose, he gave out, of lodging capuchin monks to assist him in his devotions.† He at the same time appeared to fall into one of his

* Pasquier, De Thou.

† These apartments, as well as those of the queen mother, exist with very little change, except that

habitual fits of religious fervour. He expressed disgust of all worldly affairs, and declared that he would henceforth trust to his mother and the duke for political administration. CHAP. XXV.

On the 18th of December, Henry held a council of the friends in whom he placed most confidence, the Maréchal D'Aumont, Rambouillet, Morvilliers, D'O, and Ornano. The possibility of arresting the Duke of Guise and bringing him to trial was discussed, but immediately abandoned. The Italian proverb of *Morta la bestia, morto il veneno* was cited, and the crime which it indicated resolved as the only means of safety. Guise himself, undeceived by the king's affected calm, took the opportunity of a long conversation with him to offer to resign and quit the court for Orleans, which had been a kind of fortress of security to him. Henry, however, was deeper than even Guise in dissimulation, and succeeded in pacifying him.

Three days before Christmas, the king announced his intention of passing the day before this festival in penitence and retirement at the Convent of Notre Dame de Clery. As he intended starting early on the 24th, he begged the members of the council, and of course Guise, to meet still earlier, at daybreak. At that time the duke could not come numerously accompanied. In order to delay at first, and afterwards exclude those whom he might bring with him, a captain of the body guard was bidden by the king to await the Duke of Guise on his ascending, and present him a request for the payment of this guard, at the moment much in arrear. This was a pretext to keep his followers behind.

Matters being thus arranged for the morning of the

the broken old tiles are replaced by new ones; the gilded Cordovan leather which then covered the walls has given place to linen painted to imitate its texture and design. If the reader cannot visit the castle of Blois itself, restored, or in progress of restoration, he may consult M. De la Saussaye's learned history of the château.

CHAP. XXV.

24th, the king rose at four o'clock. Eight of the most trusty of his guard, kept in waiting below, were summoned by him. At the supreme moment he informed them that the Duke of Guise had conspired to deprive him of his crown and life. He appealed to them to save him by putting the traitor to death. One and all assented; on which the king posted them in his own chamber, through which he intended Guise should pass, and through which he must have passed to reach his cabinet. He then summoned those of his guard, that were called the forty-five, chiefly Gascons, and having with similar words inflamed their zeal and received their promise, placed them in an adjoining chamber. Others the king shut up in the cells which he had prepared for the capuchins. And there was thus collected a large body of conspirators to slay their victims without the possibility of their retreating or communicating with any one outside the castle.

The duke, who had apartments in the château, as well as his brother the cardinal, was awakened, and afterwards hurried by repeated messages, that the king awaited him to proceed on his journey. He hastened to the council chamber, where the cardinal and the Archbishop of Lyons awaited him. On sitting down he complained of the cold, requested that a fire might be lighted, and begged an attendant to bring him a box of sweetmeats. An officer then informed the duke that the king wished to speak with him in his old cabinet. Guise rose, left the council chamber for the passages leading through the king's bed-room to his cabinet, and was in the act of raising the tapestry that hung over the door, when one of the conspirators seized his arm and plunged a dagger into his throat. It was the signal for all to assail him, some clung round his legs and got hold of his sword, whilst others stabbed him from behind and in all directions. The duke, though unable to utter more than *Eh Messieurs*, still

resisted, and dragged himself and his assassins from one end of the apartment to the other, finally falling and expiring near the king's bed. "How tall he is," exclaimed Henry, who came from his hiding place to contemplate the dead body; "he looks larger than life. Now at least," the monarch added, "I am king." *

The Cardinal of Guise and the Archbishop of Lyons, hearing the scuffle, instantly discerned the truth and rose, but the Maréchal D'Aumont bade them not to mind, and in a few moments the prelates were conducted to a chamber of the tower of the *Oubliettes*, where they were confined and placed under guard. The son of the duke, the Cardinal of Bourbon, Brissac, and his other friends, were arrested in the town at the same time, and soon after brought to the castle. The papers of all were seized, and amongst them the accounts of the sums regularly received by Guise from the Court of Madrid. Henry undertook to carry the intelligence of what he had done to his mother, who lay ill. He exclaimed, "The King of Paris is dead, and I have no companion to share authority with me." Catherine was frightened, asked her son if he had foreseen the consequences, and bade him beware, lest in becoming king he might be king of nothing. She asked the lives of the son of Guise and of the Duke de Nemours. The king took the life of no other save the Cardinal of Guise, who was despatched by the halberds of four soldiers, sent to conduct him from prison. Henry promised to spare the old Cardinal of Bourbon. Catherine, in order that she might announce to him his safety, caused herself to be carried to the room in which he was confined. He assailed her not with thanks, but reproaches, exclaiming: "These are your works, Madame; you brought us all here to be slaughtered." Catherine, suffering before from

* Relations of Miron and Durand, of Patte, Martyr des Deux Frères, L'Estoile, De Thou, &c

CHAP. XXV.

illness, felt it aggravated by the prelate's rude reception. She was carried back to her couch, and lingering not quite a fortnight, expired on the 8th of January, 1589.

Thus did the chief actors of the massacre of St. Bartholomew perish by each other's hands. Although no peril or provocation could excuse the wretched monarch who perpetrated the assassination, there have been few victims of such a crime who so fully merited their fate as Henry of Guise. His hand had posted the assassin who first wounded Coligny, and he afterwards undertook himself the task of seeing the murder completed. In this act, and in his subsequent proceedings, the Duke of Guise was the servitor and instrument of Spanish policy, the aim of which was to neutralise French power, and prevent French princes from reigning over the Netherlands. That he was as false to the cause of religion as to that of his country, and pursued purely selfish aims in both, is more than suspected. He aimed at the throne, and strove, doubtless not merely to reduce its occupant to nonentity, but to set aside all the natural heirs, even those who professed Catholicism.* And yet he saw, and even admitted by his acts, the vanity of the attempt to assume the crown himself, so that the manifest result of even his successful efforts must have been anarchy. This anarchy, indeed, he went far to accomplish; prompting princes and grandees to aspire, like himself, to independent governments and functions, which would have parcelled out France, and brought it back to the divisions and the nullity of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, he at the same time directly encouraged the towns not to observe and establish municipal freedom under a monarchical representative government, but to take each an isolated and hostile position, opposed to crown and aristocracy, and implying a perfect dissolution of all political society. There was,

* See MS. Colbert, 30, Pope Sixtus's idea of giving Guise his niece in marriage, and making him King of France.

no doubt, ignorance and want of foresight, as well as malignity, in the Guises, who, notwithstanding the personal ascendency acquired by their wealth, station, good bearing, and staunch bigotry, had still no political ideas of consistency or value, and were far inferior in intelligence to their rivals, whether Henry the Third or Henry the Fourth. Theirs, in fact, was the ambition of the retrograde and the dull, of those fanatics of stupidity who strive to pull down the world to the low level of themselves.

The acts of the Guises proceeded from selfish aims and personal rancour, with little principle and no intelligence. Catherine of Medicis at least possessed intelligence. Her ambition was to rule; but it was a very legitimate ambition — the wish to preserve influence in order to guide her sons, who wanted her steadiness and sagacity, even when they had come to equal her in dissimulation. To avoid war, steer through troubles, surmount and survive difficulties, set aside rivals by address and wheedling—such were the main features of her policy. And it would have been a good one, had Catherine at the same time held any good or great ulterior object in view. But the truth was, she had no definite aim. She cared neither for the Pope nor for Calvin; siding with either as she thought they were likely to triumph. She believed with the age in France and in Italy, that there existed no practicable mode of government save the will of a ruler; and she strove to be that one ruler, in setting aside all eminence of birth or station. By this she merely concentrated power in the imbecile and incapable hands of her sons, whom even she herself could not control. But worse than her want of noble purpose, was the absence of any steady principle of morality or religion. The Jesuits are accused of having invented this laxity of conscience, this reconciliation of religion with crime; but the truth is, that Italy possessed this flexibility of conscience and this impunity in crime before the Jesuits

CHAP. XXV.

appeared. The Popes themselves sanctioned any crime, any treachery, any forswearing, any murder, that furthered their views; and Catherine could always plead the permission of the head of the Church for every monstrosity that she committed. It is to be feared, therefore, that the guilt of most of the crimes of that age must be laid, not upon the backs of the individuals who committed them, but of the Church itself. "What a wretched time!" exclaimed Henry of Navarre *; "how angry must God be with us, in an age which produces such monsters, that persons who are perjurers and assassins by profession ask to be thought men of honour and virtue!" This was not so much the protest of the Huguenots against Rome, as of the man of honour against the fanatical code of morality, which had subverted all right and wrong.

The bodies of the Guise brothers had scarcely been reduced to ashes, when Henry felt all the embarrassments of his position. The necessity under which he had been of completely dissembling with the duke, to fling him off his guard, had made him alienate every man of influence really attached to his person. Epernon, for example, he had even persecuted. D'Aumont and D'O might be trustworthy, but they had neither troops nor government. The former was on the instant despatched to secure Orleans; but the leaguers were before him, and the monks heading an insurrection, D'Aumont could not force his way into the town. "If I had but 2000 arquebusiers," wrote Henry to the Duke of Nevers, on the 2nd of July, "I could master Orleans." † But Nevers would not send them; and the king's enemies established themselves firmly in that town, which was little more than a march from Blois. Ornano, sent to arrest the Duke of Mayenne at Lyons, failed likewise. Warned by a message from the Spanish envoy, the duke quitted

* Lettres de Henri IV., tom. ii. p. 352.

† Henry's letters, MSS. Bethune, 8929.

that city with great activity, and succeeded in securing almost all the towns of Burgundy and Champagne.

Paris, however, was the concentration of the League, the volcano in which its subterranean passions and fanaticism fermented, and which broke forth into formidable explosion when news of the catastrophe reached it on Christmas eve. There was doubt at first, crowds rushing for certitude to the hotels of the wife and sister of Guise. The former was about to be confined. The Duchess of Montpensier came forth with her children to animate the people and give them details of the murder. The priests immediately began to form processions, which traversed the city to St. Germain des Prés, and continued almost incessantly for well-nigh a week night and day; men and women joining them pell mell, the latter clad, or scarcely clad, in their chemises or in winding-sheets, which led, says the chronicle, to many scenes of dissoluteness. Waxen images of Henry were placed on the altar of the churches, and pricked with pins, according to the received rules of magic, to cause the death of the arch-foe. They bore torches in the procession, which at its close they solemnly extinguished, adding the exclamation of "Thus perish the Valois!" The captains assembled their own companies, and, with the aid of the town council, elected the Duke d'Aumale for their chief in the absence of Mayenne. Contributions were levied on those suspected of royalism. New municipal magistrates were chosen in lieu of those retained captive at Blois, and a delegate was sent to demand their liberation. Lincester, the popular preacher, found ranged before his pulpit, on the 1st of January, the chief dignitaries of the parliament and the city. He took advantage of it to close his sermon by demanding the audience to take an oath to spend the last *denier* and the last drop of blood to avenge the death of Guise. No one resisted; but Lincester singled out the Pre-

CHAP. XXV.

sident Achille de Harlai, and bade him raise his hand, as he took the oath, "Higher! still higher! that the people might see him." This insult to the first judge of parliament was followed by Bussy le Clerc, a low officer of the court, whom the Guises had appointed governor of the bastille, coming into the court of parliament with a band of cut-throats, and summoning the chief judge to follow him to prison. When De Harlai rose to obey, his colleagues refused to stay behind, and all marched together to prison.

The summons of Paris, and the exertions and exhortations of the chief leaguers, were attended with very general adherence and success. The prevalence of the Duke of Mayenne in the east, where he overcame all opposition, save at Chartres and Langres, emboldened the towns of Picardy and the north to declare for the League.* In Normandy there was a struggle, the royalists, and amongst them the chief judge, being driven from Rouen by the Catholics, who celebrated their triumph by a massacre. But Caen and the towns of Lower Normandy remained loyal. In Britanny there was the same division. The clergy at first succeeded in conferring all power on the Duke of Mercœur, the queen's brother, of the house of Lorraine, as protector of the Catholic religion throughout the duchy. He took possession of Nantes; but the parliament and the judges had sufficient influence to keep that provincial capital faithful to the cause; thus leaving Britanny as divided as Normandy. Opinions south of the Loire were more equally balanced. If Provence leant to fanaticism and the League, Dauphiné and Languedoc were more than half Protestant. In Toulouse the sects came to blows, Duranti, the premier president or chief judge, being massacred. It is remarkable, that the judicial dignitaries everywhere held

* Cayet, De Thou, La Satyre Menippée, MSS. Fontanieu, 389, &c.

out more disinterestedly for the crown, and displayed that spirit of loyalty which had given way to more selfish ambition and party spirit amongst the noblesse. The Maréchal de Matignon, however, succeeded in preserving Bordeaux for the king, and with Bordeaux the greater part of Guyenne. Possessed of the Château Trompette, and sweeping barricades away with his artillery, Matignon put down the mob, which had been fanaticised by the Jesuits, and expelled that fraternity altogether.

The Duke of Mayenne had marched with no very considerable force from the east, after having established his authority in Troyes, to Sens, and Orleans, which he entered in triumph. Receiving there the adherence of Chartres, he kept the king, as it were, blockaded. But being as yet not in sufficient force or funds to crush the monarch altogether, Mayenne proceeded to Paris in mid-February for the purpose of establishing a government. He could not well set aside the civic assembly, which was permanent there, and in which the quaterniers, or chief men of the sixteen quarters of the city, dominated. To diminish their authority, however, he introduced a number of clergy and functionaries into the council, increasing its number to forty, styling it the Great Council of Union between the princes, prelates, and the good towns. This great council expressed their gratitude by nominating the Duke of Mayenne lieutenant-general of the kingdom, with royal authority, until such time as the three estates could be assembled in July. As chief of the government, the lieutenant-general appointed a chancellor and a new chief judge; also new seals of office; and issued an edict for levying the taille, not as the estates of Blois had recommended, on the old standard of Louis the Twelfth, but at the usual rate, one-fourth only being diminished.*

* Registres de l'Hôtel de Ville; L'Estoile; Mémoires de la Ligue, &c.

CHAP. XXV.

Whilst the Duke of Mayenne, at the crisis brought on by the death of his brother, displayed an energy and an activity that promised well for his cause, Henry the Third appeared paralysed by the great crime which he had committed. He seemed at first to think, that, Guise slain, all France was at his feet. He was soon undeceived by finding himself master of little more than Tours, Blois, and Beaugency. Raised to a sense of danger, he despatched Sancey to Switzerland to raise troops, and ordered the Duke of Nevers to bring up the army from Poitou; the greater part of it, indeed, disbanded, as armies usually do on such occasions. And the monarch, thus placed between two parties, was necessarily reduced to seek an accommodation with one or the other.

A great inducement with the king to attempt a reconciliation with the League was the conduct and advice of Morosini, the Papal nuncio. This plenipotentiary of the holy see seemed to look upon the murder of the Duke of Guise as a venial offence—as a kind of vengeance which a sovereign had a right to take. The slaying of the Cardinal of Guise was more serious. But Morosini gave the king hopes that he might be pardoned all, provided he remained true to the Catholic cause. And inspired by these sentiments and this policy, the legate undertook to reconcile Henry with Mayenne. The latter rejected the proffers of the papal envoy with indignation*; and the Pope himself, who might have condoned the assassination of Guise, but could not overlook that of a cardinal, threatened him with excommunication.

This affront decided Henry the Third to recur to the alliance of the Huguenots, notwithstanding the remonstrance of his general the Duke of Nevers, and his own reluctance to give the semblance of truth to the

* Davila, Henry's Letter to the Pope.

accusations of the League, who represented the monarch as favourable to the Huguenots all throughout, and being in secret understanding with them. But what the king required was an accession of energy rather than of force. For although so many historians of the day represent him as almost dethroned, he was neither so desolate, nor his rival so triumphant, as they would make it appear.

The force of the League and the hostility to Henry had become more and more confined to the towns, and more and more repudiated by the *plat pays*, or open country, with its gentry and its feudal lords. Even before the death of Guise, there had many of them fallen off or began to waver; while those who remained firm were so more from personal confidence in the duke, and from hopes of his future influence and lead, than from comprehending what was the real aim of his ambition. When the duke fell, there was no longer a chief in the League who could command personal adherence, or under whom a noble following the profession of arms could look for advancement or profit or renown.

There was in the noble class, also, a strong jealousy of the towns, which displayed no little hostility to them. The conduct of the gendarmes, and indeed of all feudal and rustic soldiers, and their chiefs, was so insolent and rapacious in towns, that the municipalities would not receive them. And these having flung off the authority of both king and royal functionaries, and aristocratic influence, tended more and more *de se combiner à la manière des Suisses*, to use the expression of Duplessis; that is, to form civic republics like the Swiss.

Nor was it merely the burgess class and town populations which displayed enmity to the gentry. The peasants rose in many places, especially in Normandy, against the exactions and rapine of the soldiers, the town classes and the League favouring and exciting

CHAP. XXV.

them. This compelled the gentry to hoist the royalist banner in opposition to that of the League, and to unite in order to crush the *Gautiers*, as the insurgent peasants were called, in the name of the king.

Their rising, indeed, produced a strong reaction in favour of the crown, and made the gentry, who were the sole military class of the period, rally to it. Hence it was that the Duke of Mayenne, though declared by the League and the Parisians lieutenant-general of the kingdom, and although boasting of the adherence of the greater number of its cities and towns, could not collect an imposing or numerous army. One of the inducements offered to the lower classes by the faction to join them, was the promise of the abolition of *taillage* and dues. This promise, though not always observed, still deprived the League of the revenues it might otherwise have procured. The towns themselves did not display the energy or the sagacity necessary to supply the defects of this party. They were passionate enough in forming frantic processions, scribbling libels, and by and by in bribing assassins. But they shrunk from taking the field, preferring to remain, like the Parisians, in their *quartiers*. They did not form corps of volunteers, or bands of fighting-men, as they had during the English war. And they knew neither how to present an efficient force to the League, nor did the chiefs of the League know how to make use of their resources. It is, indeed, a melancholy fact, that the civic, or burgess, or middle class in France, have seldom had the sagacious energy to embrace an enlightened principle, and have never shown courage or wisdom to uphold it.

The towns and town classes thus remaining passive, ready to defend their walls, but not venturing beyond them, the active combatants on either side were the gentry, who joined that standard or general which offered best prospects and most pay. Although Mayenne personally no longer commanded their adherence,

still the subsidies he received from Spain attracted many to his standard, whilst his character for poverty drove the greater part away from the King of Navarre. Henry the Third, though poor for the moment, but, in case of success, master of the royal revenue, naturally commanded the allegiance of all those who despised Mayenne and abhorred town domination.

In the first instance, indeed, and under the impression of the crime that had been committed, the gentry forming the army of the Duke of Nevers disbanded; and so many prepared to desert or betray him, that Henry felt it necessary to act the part of gaoler, and conduct in person his chief prisoners from Blois to the castle of Amboise. The least important of them he was obliged to allow their guards to retain for ransom.

The Huguenots in the meantime advanced towards the Loire, taking Chatellerault, and proceeding to within six leagues of Tours, whither the king had removed his quarters from Blois.* In the first days of March Henry of Navarre sent forth a declaration, addressed to the estates of the kingdom, and drawn up by Duplessis-Mornay. There could not be a more able, powerful, or moderate document. It is, indeed, not such as one might expect to come from the mouth of the victor of Coutras; for he speaks humbly of the Protestant force and cause. What he chiefly and loudly demands is peace. "The house is falling, the boat is sinking; there is but one way of safety, and that is peace. I ask and entreat," said Henry, "not for myself alone, nor yet for the king, but for all France. And in order to obtain it, I shall be more tractable a thousand times

* "The king's army," writes Henry, "is lodged two leagues from ours, without our making any demands. The soldiers of both armies meet and embrace, instead of combating, without any truce or commands to that effect. The king's officers must come to us; for mine won't change masters." Henry's letter of March 8th to Mad. de Grammont. Lettres Missives de Henry IV.

CHAP. XXV.

than I have ever been. What opposes the peace? The declaration of the States that they will have but one religion in the country. No doubt a most desirable thing. But can it be compassed by the sword? Ten armies have not accomplished it, nor four years of civil war. You have sought to convert us with the dagger aimed at the throat. Even if my conscience would have permitted me to change in such a case, my honour could not but refuse. Call a national council; let it discuss the differences of religion, and I am ready to submit to its decision. Weigh well this offer, the alternative of continuing the war. What is to become of France or of the state? what the fate of the noblesse if the nature of government be changed? The towns, in closing their gates, suffering no authority to command, and cantoning themselves like the Swiss republicans—will they be the better of this, with the open country at their gates, and its gentry hostile to them and eager for plunder? What is the prospect of those who fill the great offices of the monarchy—of law, finance, or police? What are traders to expect? Or can agriculturists be certain to reap the produce of their lands? And the labourer, in the midst of all this confusion, what can he do but starve?"

Such truthful eloquence would have made little impression upon Henry the Third had not the League and Mayenne repudiated his every offer. He had small reliance in the power and resources of the Huguenots; and his first anxiety was to appease the Pope, as the best means of conciliating or disarming the League. Sixtus the Fifth had often disapproved of the frowardness of Henry's subjects; and when the king's envoy related to him the coming of Guise from Soissons to that of the barricades, the Pope expressed his surprise that Henry had not thrown him out of the window of the Louvre. The letter of Henry to Rome after the murder expressed his assurance that the Pontiff would

consider the action "not only as licit, but pious, restoring repose to the public by the sacrifice of an individual." *

But however the Pope, or even Mayenne, might bend, the King of Spain remained rigid. To him the leaguers chiefly looked for money, for support, and for counsel. Philip's aim was the elevation of his daughter, the infanta, to the throne of France, as descended from the Valois, through her mother, the Salic law being set aside to permit it.† Her marriage with one of the leading French grandees of the Catholic party was also contemplated by him as a probable necessity. Co-operation towards such an end could not be expected, or even demanded, from Henry the Third, who, thus repudiated by Pope, Spain, and the House of Lorraine, was compelled to turn to the King of Navarre. The Duchesse d'Angoulême carried on the negotiations which Duplessis-Mornay completed. The king ceded Saumur as a passage over the Loire to the Huguenots, who were to march against Mayenne. Due promise of tolerance was at the same time given to the religionists.‡

The truce or treaty of the 3rd April, 1589, was followed by an interview between the two kings. It took place in the grounds of the old chateau of Plessis les Tours. It was not without much dissuasion from his followers that Henry of Navarre proceeded to meet the prince who had successively sacrificed Coligny and Guise. But he saw that the king must accept his friendship. The acclamations of all present greeted both kings, but the chief regards of the spectators were turned to him of Navarre, conspicuous by his worn doublet, and the

* Henry the Third's letter to Pisani, his envoy at Rome.

† The terms of the truce are in Duplessis-Mornay, in a letter to Henry the Fourth, t. ii. p. 471.

‡ Extracts from Philip's letter to the Duke of Sessa, especially one of Oct. 8, 1590, in De Mesmes, 8931.

CHAP. XXV.

grey hat with the large white plume, by which he was wont to bid his soldiers rally.*

Although the four thousand staunch soldiers of the Huguenot army at once enabled Henry to stand fast upon the Loire, his own strength as king was far superior even to this timely aid. The League, in truth, commanded but the services and revenues of the town populations, and not even of the wealthier citizens of these. The noble class had been more and more alienated from the Guises by the exclusive dependence which these placed in the towns; the princes of the blood, indeed, and those grandees who assumed parity with them, having no king to look up to; for Henry the Third was odious, contemptible in character and crime, and Henry of Navarre's prospects of being his successor were not great. "How can I hope," said he, "with a handful of Protestants to conquer and put down the great majority of the country, which is Catholic?" The French did not see how he could become king without attempting this; and the reign of Elizabeth was before them as an example of what was to be expected from a Protestant sovereign. In despair of seeing the crown nobly and powerfully worn, the French grandees aimed at establishing each his authority in his province, and whilst the towns were advancing *de se cantonner*, like the Swiss, the great nobles meditated following the example of the German princes, who wielded sovereignty in their own lands, under merely nominal obedience to an emperor. This desire, evinced by the Montmorencies and the Epernons amongst the moderates or *politiques*, by Bouillon and Turenne amongst the Protestants, as well as by the House of Lorraine, was now shared or supported by the great body of the noblesse. The lesser gentry, however, as well as the *noblesse de robe*, clung alike to

* Cayet.

royalty, as the sheet anchor of the state, as the bond of unity which held together the kingdom and the race, which promised to render both prosperous and great, and to prevent their falling into civil and political, as well as religious, anarchy and division. When Henry the Third proved himself able to raise a royal standard and keep it floating, these men flocked to it. And the king, who in May was obliged to humble himself for the support of the 5000 Huguenots of Henry's army, was, in the lapse of a few weeks, at the head of 40,000 men. The greater number of them were Catholic gentry. Epernon sent 2000 soldiers, and Sancy contrived to secure the service of 12,000 Swiss.

Whilst the cause of royalty thus resuscitated, the towns and townsfolk who supported the League, and who were so zealous in conciliabules and processions, devised no efficient or practical means of resistance. They showed themselves, what the middle class have always done in France, unconscious of their own interests, and incapable of supporting them. They neither formed nor found an army; and the Duke of Mayenne, notwithstanding the stipend of Spain, could muster but a very inferior force. Like an able general, however, he strove to strike where he could; he attacked a royal division near Amboise, and defeated them before their reinforcements could arrive. Learning that Henry the Third was in Tours, with the suburb of that city, St. Symphorien, on the north of the river, occupied by not more than 1500 of his guard, Mayenne, after a forced march, attacked it suddenly, on the morning of the 8th of May with 10,000 men. The king himself had been nearly surprised, but gained the suburb in time to rally its garrison. He durst not call to him the Swiss in Tours lest the townsfolk should rise; and the Huguenots were at some distance. Crillon and Chatillon, however, who commanded in the Faubourg, though they could not defend it, at least

CHAP. XXV.

maintained their position at the head of the bridge, which Crillon, though wounded, prevented them from crossing. Mayenne thus gained but the pillage of St. Symphorien for his troops, who committed every outrage and cruelties. And at last, the Huguenots arriving, he decamped with as great speed as he had advanced.

The superiority of the royalists in the field was soon manifest everywhere. In Normandy, the Duke of Montpensier, who held for the king, routed, at the head of the nobility, Brissac, who led large bands of the peasantry. Near Senlis, the Duc de Longueville defeated Aumale and the Parisians to the number of 6000—the townsmen and their general escaping from the field with precipitancy, and not stopping till they got to Paris. In a short time all the towns, as far as and around the capital, were compelled to surrender to the two kings—Etampes in the south, and Poissy and Pontoise to the west. One of their divisions advanced to Vincennes, which had all along maintained the royal standard, and sent some cannon shot into the streets of the capital; while the cavalry of Navarre galloped through its southern suburbs.

In the last days of July the king established his head-quarters at St. Cloud. His brother of Navarre posted his troops in the villages upon the river as far as Vaugirard. Mayenne placed his small force to defend the Faubourgs St. Germain and St. Honoré; but he despaired of resisting the assault, which was expected on the 25th of August. There was no hope, save in the perpetration of an audacious crime. A fanatic to undertake it was soon found. Jacques Clement, a young Dominican friar, signalised for his adventurous spirit, and debauched, was visited in his convent by what he considered an angel, who bade him go forth to kill the king and earn the palm of martyrdom. In the convent where his vision took place there of course

was not wanting confessors to explain and urge it, and to promise impunity from punishment in this world and splendid rewards in the next. His purpose and mission were made no secret of. Clement was brought to the Duchess of Montpensier, who gave him every encouragement that a woman could give. He also saw Mayenne, and had from him also flattering promises and directions. He was provided with a passport, and every means of deception that could facilitate access to the king's presence, and was despatched with the assent and encomiums of the whole body of the League to commit the act of assassination.

He reached St. Cloud on the evening of the 13th of August, 1589, and, having a letter from Epernon's brother-in-law, was well received and treated, and the next morning was brought to the king's presence, under the pretext that he had important intelligence to communicate—it was expected, of a project of the royalists to deliver up one of the gates of the capital. As he demanded to pour the secret into the king's ear, Henry ordered his attendants to retire whilst the monk approached him. They did so, and almost immediately heard the monarch cry out, "Ah! the wicked monk has killed me." Clement had plunged a knife into Henry's bowels. The king plucked it out as he exclaimed, and struck Clement, who was in an instant despatched by the guards.*

* L'Estoile, Le Martyr de J. Clement, Mendoza's letter in Cape figue, Ranke, Hist. of France, &c.

CHAP. XXVI.

HENRY THE FOURTH, FROM HIS ACCESSION TO HIS RECANTATION.

1589—1593.

CHAP. XXVI.

HENRY OF NAVARRE was with his advanced troops before the Faubourg St. Germain, into which some of his cavaliers had even penetrated, when he heard what had befallen the king. Hurrying to St. Cloud, he found the monarch under the care of his physicians, and not without hopes of recovery.* Still he had misgivings of the worst, and took the opportunity to order all present to acknowledge his cousin of Navarre as his successor, should his wound prove mortal.† He at the same time warned that prince of the difficulties he would have to encounter unless he changed his religion. The King of Navarre withdrew to his quarters at Meudon, and was at supper, when another messenger brought word that the king's death was imminent.‡ Putting on their cuirasses under their cloaks, Henry of Navarre and thirty of his followers rode to St. Cloud. It was too late; Henry the Third had expired.

The night was spent by the Huguenot prince in council with his friends. The following morning he again repaired to St. Cloud, and sent his chief confidants to demand and secure the adhesion and alliance of the troops. Sully went on this errand to the

* D'Aubigné.

† Mémoires du Duc d'Angoulême.

‡ D'Aubigné, Sully.

Maréchal D'Aumont, who was besought to exert himself with the noblesse. Sancy proceeded to bargain with the Swiss. The Scotch apparently did not want solicitation, but fell at once at the feet of Henry the Fourth and saluted him king. He did not meet with the same reception in the chamber where the remains of the late monarch lay, tended by two friars. The more immediate friends of Henry the Third were there, D'Antragues being in the act of holding the deceased monarch's chin. The others, D'O, Chateauvieux, and Dampierre, vented their indignation on beholding the new claimant of the throne. Flinging their hats on the ground, all declared they would prefer surrendering to the League to the recognition of a Huguenot sovereign.*

Religion was not the sole, or indeed the chief, cause of this repugnance. The contrast was extreme between the two courts. Henry the Third's was the scene of splendour and extravagance, in which the large sums raised by the ingenuity of his financiers were lavished in fêtes, in gifts, and banquets. The king spent 240,000 livres annually—an enormous sum—on the officers around his person.† Henry of Navarre's threadbare courtiers were objects, not of derision, to these gallants in silks and velvets—Coutras had stopped their mockery—but of hatred. There was no money in the Gascon camp, and its king was sparing of what he did grasp. He promised his followers plenty of hard service and hard blows, a great deal of honour and of glory, but money, he said, was beneath their consideration. Henry of Navarre, too, was a soldier, and kept no state, lived on terms of personal familiarity with his followers, such friendships being almost the only guerdon he had to bestow for the meed of loyalty

* Daubigné, Discours de Sanci, dans les Mémoires de Nevers.

† State of Henry's household in 1571, from S mancas Papers, b. 31.

CHAP. XXVI.

and devotion. Such a master and such a life had no charms for the minions of Henry the Third, for a rapacious treasurer like D'O, or a dissolute epicurean like Villequier. Henry the Fourth's weakness for the fair sex was animated by enthusiasm and redeemed by chivalrous sentiments. His amours were those of the knight. Henry the Third and his court imitated apparently the most flagitious of the pagan emperors, whilst covering their dissoluteness by the most regular observance of fasting, pilgrimages, and processions. Henry the Fourth despised the religious bigotry as he abhorred the unmanly licentiousness. He did not pretend to be a saint, but merely aspired to be the gentleman, and the chief achievement of his life and reign was to restore what Montesquieu proclaimed as the true principle of monarchy—honour.

The courtiers of Henry the Third could not abide the thought of submitting to his successor. And it is probable that they looked on Henry the Fourth as utterly unable to resist the House of Lorraine and the League, aided by Rome and by Spain. It being repeated in the camp that Henry the Third in dying had recommended them to recognise Henry of Navarre as his lawful successor, they published an account of his dying words, omitting such declaration.* They then sent D'O to demand in their name, of the new sovereign, his abjuration of Calvinism, without which his coronation at Rheims could not take place.

This demand, accompanied by insults addressed to the Huguenots, rendered Henry pale, says D'Aubigné, either from anger or apprehension. He replied by asking if that was the way in which they proposed to revenge their murdered sovereign. The Protestants had shown they knew how to die. When they braved the stake for their faith, was he, their prince, to aban-

* Published in Michaud's collection, t. xiv.

don them when he was taken by the throat? He declined considering their opinion as that of their order of the noblesse, among whom he had friends; and to them he would appeal. They might go. Such Catholics as loved their country and respected their homes would follow him. The rest might look for salary from a more insolent master.*

When the courtiers of the late reign were shrinking under this rebuff, the soldiers of their party, who had learned to appreciate the merits of Henry of Navarre in the field, came to rally to him. Guitry entered to announce that the nobles of the Isle de France had given their adhesion. He himself folded his arms around Henry's thigh, and exclaimed that he was king, not only by right of birth, but as the brave of braves, whom none could forsake save poltroons. D'Humières promised the allegiance of two hundred gentlemen of Picardy, D'Aumont that of the nobles of Champagne. These were the very provinces which had given birth to the League, of which D'Humières had been the parent. Sancy was equally successful with the Swiss. But their adhesion did not amount to the majority of the army, of which the ultra-Catholics, real or pretended, held council. Some of these proposed to elect a new king altogether†, others to appoint Henry captain-general, until he should declare his conversion.

Notwithstanding his first indignant refusal to change his religion, Henry saw even thus early the necessity of that extreme step. The harsh vicissitudes of his life had made him alternately a Protestant and a Catholic; and regarding both religions, as a prince, a politician, and a man of the world, rather than as a conscientious Christian, he did not feel the mutual abhorrence which the sects entertained of each other.

* Meaning the King of Spain. † Mathieu, Hist. de France.

CHAP. XXVI.

He was also politician enough to have a keen sense of his interest, and of the exigencies of his position. The religious struggles, which had now lasted nearly thirty years, had not terminated to the advantage of Protestantism. Instead of being gradually progressive, it had, after a very large extension, been driven back into narrow limits, and had come to form a diminutive portion of the kingdom. In these days was far from prevailing that degree of security, respect for law, and observance of order, which could permit two sects to inhabit harmoniously the same districts and the same towns. Protestant and Catholic, where they intermingled, lived in a state of contention and war, which ended always by one of them being compelled to quit the place.* The Protestants thus became parked in certain towns and districts, which were walled and defended as *fortresses of surety;* and even treaties of pacification were but truces establishing rules, by which the hostile creeds were prevented from crushing and slaughtering each other.

Tolerance, in fact, was a thing that, however raved by the philosopher, had not yet been realised by the politician. And Protestants, instead of forming a tranquil and admitted portion of the French population, were but an armed band in the midst of it, declaring war against its institutions, its grades, its society, and its prejudices. If Henry claimed and seized the crown as the chief of this sect, he could not do less than promote its interests, favour its partisans and its doctrines, which must be done with a certain degree of violence, and by making use of the absolute power which the possessor of the crown acquired. It was impossible to play such a part without reviving and perpetuating

* Claude Haiton gives a lively description of the way in which Protestant and Catholic lived together, the former prohibiting the mass as rigidly as the Catholics forbad the *prêche*. One of the first pieces of advice that Duplessis-Mornay gave Henry on his accession was to re-establish the liberty of Catholic worship in Niort.

civil war, and without employing in the suppression of resistance and disaffection an amount of cruelty not to be contemplated by a character like Henry's, that cruelty, too, assuming in his despite the colour of religious persecution. CHAP. XXVI.

The failure of Protestantism in France was chiefly owing to the supineness of the middle class, whose cause it essentially had been, and to the depression of the labouring population. A rustic middle class, like our yeomanry, did not exist, and the civic population which proved favourable to the reformation had either been terrified into the external adoption and observance of Catholicism,* or driven away altogether from the towns of the north, including the capital. In the south, indeed, the towns for the greater part held firm, but even there they did not take up the cause with zeal, nor fling out from their numbers energetic men to lead them. Amidst all these soldiers of fortune the Huguenots engendered no Cromwell. They never raised their thoughts to war and resistance on their own account, nor to organisation after their own fashion; they trusted to princes to lead, to German or Swiss infantry to fight for them. In fact they wanted, what the middle class in France has always wanted—the perspicacity, energy, skill, and courage to divine and maintain their true interests and carry their cause through triumphantly.

Even the great and gallant Coligny, it has been before observed, was not the leader to accomplish this. He had the purity and sincerity requisite for a religious chief, but he was a noble with small sympathy for the middle or the lower class, over which he gained no influence and exercised no control. Henry of Navarre was even still more unfit and unequal to the part, for

* Those Protestants conforming to Catholicism were so numerous, that Calvin addressed and stigmatised them by the name of Nicodemites.

CHAP. XXVI.

which indeed his rank as a prince totally incapacitated him. To Coligny's want of sympathy with the vulgar Henry joined that religious indifference which was gaining fast upon the age and upon its eminent men, and which is the usual consequence of religious enthusiasm without solidity, and fanatic efforts without policy or without aim. Henry the Fourth came to bury the religious struggle, not continue it.

The king, therefore, there is little doubt, made known to the assembled chiefs of the Catholics in their camp that, however rejecting the demand of immediate conversion, he would listen to Catholic persuasion and *se faire instruire*. For him to take at once the step which they required would alienate the Huguenots, whilst it might not satisfy the Pope or conciliate those Catholics who took their policy as well as their creed from Rome. The king demanded six months' respite, which would afford time for assurance and information on those points. At their expiration he would summon a council of ecclesiastics and abide by their decision. The proposals of Henry were accepted. The greater number of the Catholic nobles, foremost amongst them the Princes of Conti and Montpensier, the Dukes of Longueville and Luxemburg, recognised Henry as king, he in turn issuing a declaration, that during the six months he would remove no Catholic from office, and appoint none but Catholics to be governors, except of the one town in each bailiwick, in which Protestant worship was to be allowed. Henry, moreover, promised to respect the privileges of the nobility, and to summon the states-general. The Catholic chiefs despatched one of their body—the Duke of Luxemburg—to the Pope to inform him of the grounds of their recognising a king, who was excommunicated, and to pray his Holiness to accept Henry as a son of the Church.*

* De Thou, Isambert's collection of French Law, D'Aubigné, &c.

The adhesion of Marshal Biron to this compact was not obtained without the promise to him of the county of Perigord. Epernon declined affixing his signature under pretext that he would not do so after Biron and D'Aumont, and marched off with his division of 6000 foot and 1200 horse to his government of the Angoumois. La Tremouille, the Protestant chief of Poitou, who maintained Condé's old rivalry to the King of Navarre, followed his example, having the better pretext that Henry was about to abandon Protestantism and its cause.* Vitry and some others went over to the League. The Duke of Nevers hesitated.

With his diminished army, Henry could not hope to force his way into the capital. To retreat with it behind the Loire was to abandon the north, of which so many of the gentry had just rallied to his standard. Obedient, no doubt, to the desire and to the suggestion of D'Aumont and D'Humières, he resolved to divide his army, giving the former a portion of it, and another portion to the Duke of Longueville to reduce the towns of Picardy and Champagne, or at least to harass them and destroy their crops. From this we may judge that it was the civic population of the north which alone held for the League. With the rest Henry determined on marching to the sea-coast of Normandy, in order to secure the money and troops which Queen Elizabeth was to send.†

Whilst the camp of the two kings was flung into consternation and distraction by Henry the Third's assassination, that event excited in Paris a burst of

* La Force (Mémoires) says they withdrew from their resources being exhausted. None of course but the foreign troops were paid, and as Henry stipulated to give no commands to the Huguenots, they were in a worse position than even the Catholic soldiers.

† Cecil writes to Hickes, that the King of Navarre had promised under hand and seal not to change his religion, no doubt in the hopes of obtaining this succour. (Wright's Queen Elizabeth.) Henry sent De Beauvoir to England to demand succour, August 19.

CHAP. XXVI.

uncontrolled joy. The mother and sister of the late Duke of Guise, the Duchesses of Nemours and Montpensier, went forth themselves into the streets first, distributing green scarfs, and then to the altar, to announce the death of the tyrant and the martyrdom of St. Jacques Clement. The clergy echoed the joy and the panegyrism, and the mother of the assassin, brought hastily to Paris, was addressed by them in the language reserved for the Virgin Mary. The general satisfaction at Henry's death was troubled by the difficult necessity of naming a successor. The Cardinal of Bourbon, uncle of Henry the Fourth, and declared presumptive heir by the League, was in the hands of the opposite party. The Duke of Mayenne was urged at once to assume the crown, to which he was well inclined; but the more violent of the Parisians were opposed to him, and, receiving money and counsel direct from the Spanish agents, they would hear of no king but Philip the Second, whilst the more moderate leaguers preferred the cardinal. Mendoza, the Spanish envoy, not prepared or instructed for the catastrophe of the vacant throne, recommended the Cardinal of Bourbon as the best choice for the moment, and Mayenne could not oppose his being proclaimed. Henry the Fourth tried to negotiate with the duke, whose replies were polite but evasive. Mayenne saw, justly enough, that the only path to the throne was victory, and applied himself to collect forces and crush the diminished army of his rival.*

Henry effected the division of his army at Compiegne, whither he had brought the remains of the late king. He then, with some 5000 Huguenots and not so many Catholics, struck across Normandy to Dieppe, and returned to threaten Rouen on the 24th (August, 1589). Mayenne had mustered nearly 30,000 infantry, Walloons, Lansquenets, and Lorrainers, under the Duke of

* L'Estoile, Palma Cayet, De Thou, &c.

Lorraine's son, the Marquis del Pont; 500 horse joined him from Flanders. Learning the insignificant force that had accompanied Henry into Normandy, the Leaguer General resolved to march thither at once and crush him. Although Caen, Dieppe, Calais, and Boulogne had declared for the king, he preferred posting his little army in a camp adjoining the castle of Arques, on a height within view of Dieppe.* It was only approachable by narrow roads through stony or marshy ground, overflowed by rivulets. A wood covered a portion of it. Henry not only fortified his camp by a deep ditch, but enclosed the wood by another, and continued what the memoirs of the time called a *tranchée perdue* to a building denominated a *maladrerie*, somewhat in front. He placed the arquebusiers in this building, and a great portion of his infantry in the trench. After a day spent in skirmishing, the Duke of Mayenne, on the morning of the 23rd of September, advanced under cover of a thick fog. The wisdom which had directed Henry's choice of a position was then evident; for the space between the river and the entrenchments was so small that Mayenne could send but 4000 infantry and not more than 1200 horse† to the attack. The forces of the contending parties were thus equalized. Still Mayenne's infantry drove the royalists from the maladrerie, and were engaged in the attack of the trench when the first charge of the king's horse, under La Force and the young Duc d'Angoulême, drove back that of the Catholics, its chief, Sagonne, being slain. The Huguenot infantry, with the Swiss, then advanced to attack Mayenne's foot, and did so with so much vigour as to slay 600 of them, and throw the rest

* The Duc d'Angoulême and the Duc de la Force, in their Memoirs, have left accounts descriptive of Arques and its engagement. There are, besides, Henry's official account in the "Discours de ce qui s'est passé, &c.," in Mémoires de la Ligue, t. iv., and the account of the League in the third document of MSS. Colbert, 31.

† Leaguers' account in MSS. Colbert.

CHAP. XXVI.

into such rout and panic, that six companiesof lansquenets gave up their standards in token of surrender. The Huguenots, instead of disarming them, helped them over the trench and allowed them to form on the edge of the wood inside. The Leaguers, however, who had abundance of troops, were able to bring a fresh force into the combat, with which they drove back the Huguenot cavalry with loss to their entrenchments, and rallied such of their foot as were routed. The Leaguers' account says, that in this rout the old Maréchal Biron was surprised and captured, but subsequently broke loose from those who guarded him. This seems to be told as an excuse for the conduct of the lansquenets, who, after having submitted and been helped over the trench, no sooner saw their own troops masters, than they turned against their late captors and threatened to carry the inner fortifications and the camp itself. It was a critical moment. Henry bade the Protestant minister who attended him pour forth a psalm, in order to inspirit the Huguenots and invoke the aid of Providence in his extremity. At the moment Chatillon arrived with the arquebusiers who had been left to guard the Dieppe suburb, and these fresh troops, rushing on the lansquenets, drove them along the trench, and ended by recapturing the *maladrerie*. The Maréchal Biron, with the Swiss, was thus enabled to make head against the enemy's cavalry, which was breaking through the apertures of the entrenchments; and, the fog clearing away, Henry ordered the cannon of the castle, as well as some guns which he had posted in battery, but which could not before be used, to open upon the enemy. This completed their discomfiture. After a few skirmishes and vain attempts upon Dieppe, Mayenne, who had lost half his army, and who learned that the king was about to be joined by D'Aumont and Longueville, withdrew, not to Paris, but to Amiens. He besought the Prince of Parma for

succour, a demand which the Spanish envoy in France supported, but which the prince would not grant without fresh orders from his master.

The king had scarcely re-entered Dieppe, after the victory of Arques, when several English vessels arrived with 200,000 livres from Elizabeth, and a quantity of powder and ball.* Soon after came a body of Scotch, and finally 4000 English, under Lord Willoughby. Elizabeth warned the king at the same time to take care of his prisoner, the Cardinal of Bourbon. She had probably become aware that the League had a plan for rescuing him from Chinon. Henry instantly sent word to Duplessis Mornay, commanding at Saumur, who, though ill, succeeded in securing the Cardinal, not without largely paying those who guarded him, and transferred the King of the League to Fontenay. The royal army was then led to a sudden attack upon Paris; and the king hoped for success, if his lieutenants could but execute his order of breaking down all the bridges, by which Mayenne could cross the Oise, in order to come to its succour.

On the morning of All Saints, Henry directed divisions of his army to assault the different gates of the suburbs south of Paris; the Parisians were driven from them, leaving nearly a thousand dead, and fifteen pieces of cannon. The king ascended the steeple of St. Germain des Près to observe an attempt made by La Noue to cross the Seine to the point of the Cité. The current of the river nearly carried off the gallant soldier, who had but an arm of iron to guide his horse. All the advantage that accrued to Henry was the pillage of the suburbs, which greatly enriched his army.† Paris

* Mém. D'Angoulême. Mendoza writes to Philip that some of these vessels, with a British envoy on board, were taken by a Dunkirk cruiser. Letter of Sept. 28. MS. Colbert, 33.

† The Avis to Caietan (MS. Colbert, 31) says that it equalled the plunder of Orleans or Lyons; and that Mayenne made it worse by a *grande levée de deniers* and promiscuous confiscations.

CHAP. XXVI.

was in a panic until the evening, when the cavalry of Mayenne's vanguard entered it. The duke found the bridge of St. Maxence unbroken and passed over it, entering Paris with his army. This defeated the king's attempt to surprise the capital.

Henry's hope was, however, high. Queen Elizabeth, excited by Walsingham, was prompt to afford him every succour. The Protestant princes of Germany, who had promised the two Henrys, before the death of the late king, 300,000 crowns, had already deposited a portion of it in the hands of the Landgrave of Hesse, and Sancy, who proceeded thither on the part of Henry, had begun to raise troops.* His Spanish allies were as yet lukewarm in the cause of Mayenne. The Prince of Parma, disgusted with his incapacity, proposed to enter France with a large army, not as an auxiliary to the duke, but on account of his own master;† nor would he promise any more succours without an especial order from Philip. Henry despatched D'Aumont and Longueville to Lorraine to rally the foreign troops, whilst he himself proceeded to reduce the towns of the South. The civic population of this region were, indeed, slow to welcome Henry the Fourth. "None," says the Duc d'Angoulême, "save Tours, Bordeaux, Langres, Chalons, Compiègne, and Clermont in Auvergne, pronounced his name, or followed his cause." The duke includes in this list the Huguenot town of La Rochelle, which was, in truth, supine in its loyalty, seeing the king surrounded by Catholics, and putting little faith in his constancy. Such conduct on their part was calculated to precipitate his conversion. It was the nobility and gentry who gradually rallied to Henry, whilst the towns seemed merely sensible to the progress of his arms. He took

* MSS. Colbert, v. 31. Henry's correspondence with Landgrave of Hesse, published by Rommel.

† Intercepted letter from commandant Moreo. MSS. Colbert, v. 33.

Vendôme and Le Mans, and made a kind of triumphal entry into Tours. He also reduced Lower Normandy, Rouen, and some towns of the upper province, still remaining firm in the alliance of Paris. In more remote provinces, Henry did not want heroic partisans, such as Lesdiguières in Dauphiné, who struggled gloriously, if not always successfully, against the ambition of the neighbouring princes, that never wanted succour and encouragement from Spain. The Duke of Savoy invaded Dauphiné, and transmitted to the Parlement of Grenoble a claim to the crown. They referred him to the states-general, and Lesdiguières defied him. Nor, although he took possession of Saluzzo, and pressed Geneva, was he more successful in Provence, to which he transferred his ambitious schemes. In the North, the Duke of Lorraine was another pretender, in Brittany the Duc de Mercœur. But Henry limited his efforts to the provinces immediately around the capital, establishing his seat of government and parliament at Tours, whither he summoned the council of ecclesiastics that was "to enlighten his conscience." At Tours, he had the satisfaction of receiving the Venetian ambassador, Moncenigo. A ministerial revolution had taken place in that republic, which, as we should say, brought the liberals to power. These shook off the dread of Philip the Second, and sent to recognize Henry. The Pope protested, and even stormed; but the arguments of the Venetian envoy won upon the Pope himself, and they told Henry to take care to be victorious, in which case "he would get from Rome all the assistance he might want."*

Pope Sixtus was, however, assured by the envoys of the League that Henry was in no condition to resist; and the Pontiff drew from this conviction the same

* MSS. Brienne, 351.—"Les battus seront toujours excommuniés," wrote De Maisse from Venice to Cardinal Lenoncourt. MSS. De Mesmes.

CHAP. XXVI.

inference which the Prince of Parma did — that no French prince, least of all Mayenne, was capable of succeeding, but that the country must fall a prey to the princes who surrounded and coveted it. His Holiness did not see why Rome should not have its share, as well as Spain or Savoy, and he proposed making use of the treasure which he had amassed to send 25,000 soldiers under his banner to France, under the command of the Duke of Urbino, his nephew.* To pave the way for this conquest, Sixtus sent Cardinal Caietan as his nuncio to Paris, to assume the high influence there.

Mayenne adroitly made use of the nuncio's name and mission to oppose the designs of Spain and its ambassador, Mendoza, who had taken into his pay the principal personages of the Sixteen, and who, through these, proposed that Philip the Second or his representative should assume the chief authority. Mayenne represented it as indecorous to come to any important decision before the arrival of the nuncio. The Cardinal of Bourbon had been declared the rightful heir, and the best thing now was to proclaim him king. As he was a captive and in extreme old age, his authority must be short-lived and nominal, and would allow time to consider with due gravity who should be his successor. Mendoza gave way to these arguments, and the Cardinal of Bourbon was again and more solemnly proclaimed king by the parlement and the council, Mayenne's power as lieutenant-general being preserved and repeated in the act. (Nov. 21, 1589.)†

Though unable to prevent this, the Zealots demanded that Philip the Second should at least be declared Protector of the kingdom. This proposal was discussed in the Council of the Union, and was met with indignation by many.‡ Mayenne pleaded that in this case, as in

* Letters from Commandeur Diou from Rome. MSS. de Mesmes, 8,8334.

† Mendoza's letter in MSS. Colbert, 33. Mayenne's in De Mesmes.

‡ Villeroy.

the previous one, it would be more decorous to await the arrival of the legate. He at the same time pressed the Spanish agents to declare their aims more fully, which they did, demanding the Protectorate for Philip, and the succession to the Crown of France after the death of the Cardinal of Bourbon for the Infanta Isabella, daughter of the Spanish king by Elizabeth of Valois, that princess espousing a French husband, and bringing Flanders and Burgundy as dowry. Philip was to pay two millions to support the war, to open Peru to French vessels, to permit no sale of offices, to confer the post of officer on none save gentlemen, and to establish the decrees of the Council of Trent.* The Moderates, especially Villeroy, made the most energetic opposition to these demands, and they were joined by Espignac, Archbishop of Lyons, just released from captivity, a staunch friend of the Guises and the League. Mayenne adopted their objections, and met the motion by declaring that the Pope was the best and first protector of Catholics in France. The Court of Union was still prepared to make small account of Mayenne's opposition, and threatened to vote the Protectorate in his despite, as well as that of the Moderates and of parlement. The duke, therefore, was driven to a *coup d'état*. He dissolved the Court of Union, as a republican assembly incompatible with monarchy, and formed a council of fewer members, who might accompany him to war. He at the same time gave the seals to the Archbishop of Lyons, and appointed four new secretaries. The presence of his troops in Paris enabled Mayenne to achieve this victory over the Seize.† (Dec. 1589.)

His bold movement could not but indispose the Spanish agents, who became even more suspicious

* MSS. De Mesmes, 8,896 1. Palma Cayet. Dialogue de Malheustre et Manant in the Satire Menippée.

† Villeroy. Cayet, Mém. de la Ligue. Mayenne's letter in the Collection des Loix. Poirson's Hist. de Henry IV.

CHAP. XXVI.

on learning the secret negotiations which the duke, by means of Villeroy, was carrying on with the king, symptoms of which became manifest in an order of the lieutenant-general to cease cruel reprisals in war, or plunder of the property of such Catholics as served in Henry's army. Mayenne was obliged to bring the legate to Paris to oppose his influence to that of the Spaniards, and he succeeded so far as to extract from Caietan, soon after his arrival, a supply of money to enable him to enter immediately on the campaign.*

Henry's aim seemed to be to complete the reduction of Normandy. To prevent this, Mayenne, early in 1590, recaptured Pontoise and laid siege to Meulan. Whilst both armies were manœuvring on each side of the Seine, tidings came that the castle of Rouen had been surprised by the royalists. Both generals marched, the one to repair, the other to profit by, the event. On his march, Henry learned that the townspeople had recaptured the castle; and turning short, in consequence, he laid siege to Dreux in the last days of February. Mayenne seized the opportunity to hurry to Brussels in order to demand succour of the Prince of Parma. He went also to appeal personally to this commander, or to Philip himself, against their inferior agents in Paris. Farnese acceded so far to the duke's request as to give him 1500 horse and 500 arquebusiers under Count Egmont. With these, after rejoining his army, he marched upon Henry, who raised the siege of Dreux to accept the proffered engagement.

The armies met on the 14th of March, on the plains of Ivry, which stretches between that village and Nonancourt. Mayenne's army amounted to 8000 foot and 5000 horse; the king's, according to Daubigné, to 6500 foot and to 2000 horse. Each army was divided into six or seven squadrons which were to charge, and, in fact, fight the battle, a corps of infantry

* Simancas papers, quoted in Bouillé.

being stationed at the side of each, armed with arquebusses to fire as the enemy approached, and to serve as a rampart behind which the horse might rally. Marshal Biron was to remain in reserve at first with a small body, which augmented in the course of the battle, by others either broken in the field, or coming up too late. Henry, having gone round "to do the office of sergeant," bade his followers, if they lost their ranks or cornets, to rally to his "white plume, which they should always find on the road to victory and honour." About 10 o'clock, the Huguenot minister having preluded to the engagement with the accustomed psalm, the artillery was ordered to play; and the light cavalry, sent in advance on the left under the Baron de Biron and the grand-prior, came to engage the Spanish horse under Count Egmont. At first they were driven back, but the contest was restored by D'Aumont. During the skirmish, the Duke of Mayenne had commanded Tavannes to move from the left to support the Spanish horse on the other wing. This movement disordered the arrangement of the bodies of infantry; and the cavalry of the League, in returning to rally, did not find space to perform the manœuvre. Some of them flung themselves accordingly on the strongest and most central squadron, in which was Mayenne himself, and threw it into partial disorder. The king seized the opportunity to charge, although the miry nature of the ground was unfavourable for heavy cavalry, and obliged them to advance "at a soft gallop." * This was more favourable for the sabres of the royalists than for the lances of the *reistres*, who were defeated, and Henry's plume disappeared for a time in the mélée.

Some of the *reistres* had made part of the army

* Expression of Lyly, the English officer who was present, and sent not only a relation, but a plan of the battle. S. P. O. MSS. France, No. 95.

CHAP. XXVI.

which Sancy raised in Germany for Henry, and which the Duke of Lorraine had attacked, dispersed, and captured. Enlisted in the army of the League, they fought without ardour, and surrendered when they found an opportunity. The Swiss, as little zealous, yielded to Biron. The king emerged from the charge, and from the close combat which followed it, with but thirty followers. He instantly placed himself at the head of the fresh corps, but lately arrived upon the field under D'Humières * and Mornay, and rushed with them into the fray. The simultaneous and steady advance of Biron, at the head of the reserve, deprived Mayenne of all hopes of either resisting or rallying his men. He fled in consequence, leaving behind his baggage and artillery, which could not recross the narrow bridge over the Eure, and he was himself obliged to open a way by the sword through the disordered ranks of the fugitives of his own army.† No quarter was shown to the lansquenets, in recollection of their behaviour at Arques; the *croix rouges*, as they were called, were all cut down. Count Egmont perished, being in the service of that prince who had decapitated his father. A prince of Brunswick fell also. Chataignerai was the only Frenchman of rank who fell on the side of the League; Clermont d'Entragues on Henry's. The king pursued the fugitives to the gates of Mantes, and slept at Rosny, Sully's château, a few leagues from that town.‡

On the very same day that Henry triumphed at Ivry, his lieutenant in Auvergne, De Curton, defeated the Count of Randon, governor of that province for the League, before the town of Issoire, which he had besieged. The letter of De Curton and of Henry,

* Lily represents the royalists as defeated in this quarter, until the battle was restored by D'Humières.

† Lily.

‡ D'Aubigné, Mathieu, King's Lettres Missives, Biron's Letter, Discours de la Bataille d'Ivry, and Mayenne's Letter to the Pope in MSS. Colbert, v. 31. Lily's Letters in State Papers. France, 95.

announcing their respective victories, crossed each other on the road.

The king wrote to Queen Elizabeth his expectation that the victory would open to him the gates of his refractory towns, the more stubborn, such as Orleans, being excepted. But his progress was checked by the jealous partisans in his own camp. The political Catholics, though but the dregs of his predecessor's court, whom Henry entrusted with the management of the finances and most offices of trust, saw that the victory of Arques and of Ivry indisposed the monarch to conversion. Henry was grateful for the success of his arms to the religious banner under which he fought; and when the Duc de Longueville seized the opportunity to press him to that act, the king replied that it was no longer the time to think of such a thing.* The Catholics around him, therefore, exerted themselves to neutralise, rather than push, the victory. Through the manœuvres of the treasurer, D'O, the king and his army were detained fifteen days at Mantes without money to pay the troops or resume their march.† This could only be done after that succours, especially in ammunition, had been sent by Elizabeth. But small immediate profit was derived from the victory of Ivry save the possession of the towns both up and down the river. He took Meulan, Mantes, Corbeil, Lagny; Sens resisted. But Henry carried the Bridge of Charenton on the 25th of April, and presented himself before Paris with 14,000 men and 2800 horse.

The force was scarcely sufficient to invest a city so large as Paris, especially whilst the enemy held the strong places of Vincennes and St. Denis, and it was necessary to reduce them in order to complete the blockade. The Duke of Mayenne remained outside for the purpose of soliciting and obtaining aid from

* Sully.

† Ibid.

CHAP. XXVI.

the Prince of Parma. The chief command in Paris devolved upon the young Duke of Nemours, who had 8000 foreign troops, Swiss and Spaniards, under his command. Paris, however, chiefly relied upon its 50,000 enrolled citizens, who were strongly impressed with the pillage of the suburbs by the royalist army in preceding years, and who, independent of fanaticism, had every incentive to defend themselves and the city from the same fate.

It was, however, not Henry's intention to take Paris by assault. He shrunk from the destruction and disorder which must ensue, as well as from the peril that might beset his small army when dispersing to plunder in the streets of a large and populous capital. He preferred reducing the city to submission by blockade, which seemed facile, as he was master of the rivers as well as of the principal roads; and the Duke of Mayenne was totally unable, since the defeat of Ivry, to raise a sufficient body of troops to force his lines. The means of defence possessed by Paris consisting principally in the firmness and powers of endurance of the armed citizens, the chiefs, the greater part of whom were ecclesiastics, directed their efforts towards fanaticizing the people. Although the Duke of Nemours was the commander, the Papal legate, Caietan, wielded supreme authority, aided by Mendoza, the Spanish ambassador. A number of bishops—Panigarola, Bishop of Asti, the Bishops of Paris, Plaisance, Rheims, Senlis—formed the council. Whilst Henry was planting his cannon upon Montmartre, the Sixteen were discussing and passing a decree declaring he had forfeited the crown, and the preachers enlarged upon it from their pulpits. Processions were ordained through the city, in which the several kinds of friars, to the number of 1300, paraded, the crucifix in one hand, but a sword in the other. Although this muster of the monastic clergy, and strange accoutrements, afterwards furnished food for satire,

they were still influential for the moment in maintaining the obstinacy of the Parisians, and encouraging them to defy hunger from within as well as assault from without. This did not prevent the Duke of Nemours from seizing all the church ornaments, which were of the precious metals, and converting them into money to pay his foreign soldiers. The better class of citizens and judges began to murmur against these acts of spoliation and frenzy; and towards the end of May a conspiracy for giving up the town was planned. It was discovered, however, and made the pretext for exacting heavy ransoms. News that the nominal king, the Cardinal of Bourbon, had expired in his captivity at Fontenay made no difference to the League. They merely formed a new procession, and took a more solemn oath never to submit to Henry of Navarre.

The month of June, however, brought great increase of suffering. Wheaten bread was not to be had at any price. Oaten flour at first supplied its place; and Mendoza, the Spanish envoy, began to distribute bread made of an admixture of refuse, of which ground bones were said to be one of the components. This was called Madame de Montpensier's bread, from the energy with which she recommended it. In the midst of the distress, the democrats of the Sixteen found reason to suspect that the clergy and the convents had secret stores of provisions for their own use. They instituted a search, found their suspicion true, and compelled them to feed the people for a time. But even this resource was soon exhausted; and, as they entered upon the month of July, the Parisians were obliged to feed upon the flesh of every kind of animal — horses and mules, cats and dogs, and even more heathen food. A child was no longer safe in the streets, even if lured there by hunger, for there were beings who hunted children to devour them. Such children as had died of hunger were salted by their mothers and eaten.

CHAP. XXVI.

In the midst of all this, not a word of surrender. The Terrorists, who contrived to keep up their own strength and spirits, stifled every such cry. Some of the inhabitants ventured outside the walls to gather herbs, and braved for even such aliment the swords of the besiegers. They were driven back immediately. The Huguenots declared it was a judgment of heaven upon Paris for the Massacre of St. Bartholomew. Henry was more humane. A crowd of hunger-stricken citizens having found or forced their way to his quarters, so moved him with compassion, that he allowed three thousand starving inhabitants to withdraw from the beleaguered city.* In July, Mayenne conveyed promises of speedy succour. He had betaken himself in person to the Prince of Parma, and found the reluctance of that chief to enter France overruled by the positive orders of Philip the Second. He had received a command to succour Paris. Still his movements were slow; and the king ordered upon one night, that of the 24th of July, the simultaneous attack of all the suburbs. Sully and Daubigné describe as a beautiful sight the commencement of the fire by the *bluettes de feu* at all the gates encircling the city. The attenuated Parisians were unable to make any effective resistance, and ere daybreak the whole of the suburbs were occupied by the royalists, and the League blocked within its inner walls. The sufferings from famine then became insupportable, and although Mayenne still continued to send promise of succour, the clergy were obliged to despatch some of their body to treat. As they had not power to consent to the surrender of the capital, the king refused to listen to them. But the

* Some of his followers were not so disinterested. They at the commencement of the siege allowed provisions to be brought in on paying them acertain sum — an indulgence which greatly prolonged the siege. Others sold supplies to individuals, "for scarves, feathers, stuffs, silk stockings, gloves, girdles, beaver hats, and *autres galantises.*" See Sully, Mémoires.

Leaguers, most zealous and most influential, supported by Nemours, the legate, and the Spanish envoy, had the foreign troops at their command. This stifled the voices of the discontented citizens; they hanged some, exiled most of the remaining rich, making them pay dearly for their lives. In such a state of things, Henry had but to give the signal for assault, and Paris would have been captured. His troops were eager for plunder, and his captains were discontented that the king showed more compassion for his rebel subjects than consideration for them.*

The Duke of Parma's advance soon rendered the assault of the capital impossible. Yet Henry was unwilling to abandon the siege, hoping the extremities to which the inhabitants were reduced would compel them to submit. Panigarola, Bishop of Asti, who was then in Paris, and one of its most zealous defenders, says, that, could Henry have maintained the blockade two days longer, the city must have surrendered.† To so narrow a crisis was brought the great struggle between the creeds. Had Paris fallen, the other towns would have followed its example, and Henry, grateful for the divine aid, would have probably rejected all ideas of conversion. This would have imposed great, but possibly not insurmountable, difficulties upon him. The noblesse might by degrees have rallied to the religion of their king, and the line of demarcation, as well as the balance of power, between Protestantism and Catholics, have materially changed.

When the Prince of Parma reached Meaux with an army not inferior to Henry's, the king could not maintain his forces, as the siege required, on both sides of

* For Siege of Paris, see Corneio in Mém. de la Ligue, Cayet, L'Estoile, Le Satyr Menippeé, Letters of Elizabeth's agents in S. P. France, 95.

† Relazione al Duca di Savoia sulle cose di Francia per Panigarola, MS. Colbert, v. 31. Lily's letter to Stafford corroborates this.

CHAP. XXVI.

the river. Abandoning, therefore, the southern suburb, he collected his army on the plains of Bondy, and made some attacks on the prince's outposts. He saw at once how formidable an enemy he had to deal with. The royalists, for the most part a feudal host of gentry, had their discipline relaxed by the siege; and the Spaniards, who were always entrenched and unattackable, never allowed a false move or a disorderly march of their enemies to take place without instant punishment.

There was a difference of opinion amongst the king's generals as to the best mode of operation. La Noue was for stirring but a very short distance from Paris, and awaiting the enemy at the conflux of the rivers, with the facility of falling on the prince when he attempted to cross. Maréchal Biron, on the contrary, wished to march forward to meet the enemy where the Parisians could not aid him by a sortie. The king adopted a middle course between both opinions, withdrew his troops from the suburbs, but, instead of keeping the advanced position which he had first occupied at Claye, he took post at Chelles, with the intention of offering battle to the Prince of Parma. That general occupied the suburb of Lagny, and the side of the hills which stretch from it, his flank covered by the river, and his front by marshy ground. Henry could not force the prince to action. On challenging him to fight, Farnese replied that he had entered France for the purpose of succouring Paris, and thought it best to accomplish this without a battle.* He indeed gave up all thoughts of an engagement on perceiving the king's army equal in numbers to his own, and far superior in that brilliant cavalry which then decided actions.

The respective positions of the armies allowed the Prince of Parma to press the siege of Lagny, which

* He complained that Mayenne had underrated Henry's force, and *avait fait le loup trop petit.*

Henry could not succour without crossing the Marne, and leaving the road to Paris open. Owing to the direction of the wind, he did not even hear the cannonade till long after it had commenced; so that the Maréchal d'Aumont, sent with two regiments to reinforce the garrison, only arrived after the latter had repelled several assaults. Just as it approached and proceeded to change the guard upon the ramparts, the Spaniards returned to the attack; and, taking advantage of the change, penetrated into the breach. D'Aumont could not expel them, and thus Lagny was taken under Henry's very beard.*

The success of this feat, so demonstrative of the military superiority of the Prince of Parma, decided the campaign. The relaxation of the blockade had already allowed provisions and reinforcements to enter Paris, to resume the siege of which was idle. The Prince of Parma would not fight, and there was neither profit nor glory in standing to observe the successful capture of towns and the discomfiture of every attack. The king's army began in its turn to be ill provided. D'O, who had charge of the finances, allowed the king himself to be without provisions even for his own table; whilst Sully asserts that the old servitors of the late sovereign fared sumptuously. Henry one day, finding nothing on his own table or in his tent, proceeded to D'O and sat down to a very fair repast. When D'O was asked to pay the officers or troops, he mocked them. The month of September was far advanced, and the feudal soldiers had served since the month of May at almost exclusively their own expense, been baulked of the hope of the plunder of Paris, and with no prospect now of getting the better of Farnese and Mayenne. All, therefore, determined to depart of their own

* Besides the French memoirs, consult *Sommaire Discours* of what happened since the coming of the Prince of Parma, in State Papers, France, 96.

CHAP. XXVI.

accord, without consulting Henry's orders or convenience.

The king regretted the lenience he had shown to the Parisians, for which Elizabeth reproached him, and attempting a tardy redemption of that fault, he despatched Chatillon with the infantry to surprise Paris on the side of the quarter of the University, to scale the wall if possible, and take possession of the Abbaye of St. Germain. Chatillon was too precipitate; he reached the walls too early in the night, and his presence being suspected, the Jesuits, who had their convent near, kept good watch and ward, and at daybreak appeared in armed numbers upon the walls to repel the royalists. Having failed in this attempt, all that remained for Henry was to give the semblance of a decent retreat to a complete break-up of his army; the gentry withdrew to their homes, and the king, with such soldiers as remained for pay, withdrew to Creil and Clermont, leaving the Prince of Parma to enter the capital in triumph.*

Such was the campaign of 1590, and perfectly similar was that of 1591. Whenever the king mustered the valiant gentry of the province in which he happened to be at war, he was the superior in the field. The Duke of Mayenne dared not show himself, and even when the Prince of Parma joined him with his Spaniards, they were careful to take such positions as could not be forced, and to advance by such marches as did not admit of surprise. On the other hand, Henry's brilliant army, though formidable in the field, was inefficient to besiege, and very little under his command. Though they had beaten Mayenne at Ivry, and had been anxious for the capture and plunder of Paris†, they

* Account of disbanding of Henry's army in Sir Edward Stafford's letter of Sep. 6, 1590. S. P. France, 96.

† The soldier's gains or plunder were at this time so considerable that a regular tax of one-fifth was levied upon it, and formed a handsome source of revenue. Palma-Cayet.

were evidently not desirous of fighting a battle with the Prince of Parma, the gain of which would only have confirmed Henry in his Huguenotism. The king therefore turned his hopes to the German levies, which his agents were raising, and which he trusted to Elizabeth's generosity to pay. He spent the winter of 1590-91 waiting for them, engaged at first in the siege of Clermont, and in harassing the Prince of Parma's retreat*, and the spring in the siege of Chartres, which surrendered at length on the 10th of April. In the remote provinces his partisans and lieutenants vigorously held their ground, although Philip the Second sent Spanish armies to Languedoc and to Britanny. The capture of Hennebon and the fortification of the port of Blavet, in the latter duchy, had had the good effect of stirring Elizabeth to send succour, the Earl of Essex coming with 3000 of his compatriots, whilst as many more were sent to Britanny.† In the south, Montmorency held his ground against Joyeuse, who, aided by 4000 Spaniards, maintained the cause of the League. Sancy enabled the Genevese still to defy the Duke of Savoy, whilst the gallant Lesdiguières completely subdued the Catholics of Dauphiné, and compelled its capital, Grenoble, to submit.

The fortunes of the war remained, however, sufficiently balanced and uncertain not only to fill Henry's mind with anxiety, but those of his supporters with disaffection. The Catholics, who had rallied to him, pressed for his conversion. The Huguenot cities held aloof, and gave small support in men or in funds. And even his own kith and kin conspired to take advantage of his weakness. One great cause of this was the inveterate enmity of Rome. Experience, indeed, had suggested to Sixtus the Fifth the folly as well as iniquity of dethroning the rightful heir of the French crown for

* For this retreat see the letter of Grimston, who accompanied Henry, S. P. ib.

† Henry's letter, January, 1591.

CHAP. XXVI.

the mere profit of Spain; for he had soon perceived the absurdity of hoping to acquire any portion of the kingdom for himself. He had therefore listened to the French envoy, the Duke of Luxemburg, had disapproved of Caietano's having identified himself with the Parisian democrats, and would no doubt have relaxed in his severity towards Henry, but death cut short his good intentions (Aug. 1590); and Philip the Second, triumphant in the conclave, procured the election of successive Popes, after his own principles and heart.

Henry was also embarrassed by intrigues and infidelity on the part of his own Bourbon family. The Count of Soissons and the Cardinal of Vendôme, called also Cardinal of Bourbon, began to entertain hopes, each of them, to succeed to Henry's rights, should the Pope succeed in dethroning him as heretic. Vendôme entered into negotiations with the League, and asked for a daughter of the Duke of Guise.* Soissons' project was to espouse Catherine, Henry's sister, and strengthen his own claims by hers. The Countess of Grammont, Henry's discarded mistress (he was now completely captivated by Gabrielle d'Estrées), had planned that Soissons should carry off Catherine, but the project was defeated.

What even more alarmed Henry than the intrigues of the Condés, was the discontent of the Huguenots, whom the stipulations entered into at St. Cloud left in the same oppressed condition, which they had endured under the previous king. That the accession to the throne of their own prince and chief should not restore to them the immunities they had enjoyed by previous edicts of Henry the Third himself, seemed inconceivable and intolerable. To take their just complaints into consideration, and satisfy them as far as could be done, without offending or alienating the Catholics of his party,

* He afterwards asked for a daughter of the Duke of Mayenne in marriage. Letter of D'Orbais in Paulin's Paris Cabinet Historique, tom. iii.

Henry summoned a council of all his friends at Mantes in July 1591. No sooner had the king opened to them his desires, as well as this claim to have the last unjust edicts of 1585 and 1588 repealed, in order to restore the Huguenots to the rights they enjoyed under the edicts of January, than the Cardinal of Vendôme arose, and in a most intemperate speech declared he would never consent to such concessions. Henry mildly replied to his relative that the old Cardinal of Bourbon had himself consented to the edict of January.* The cardinal's interested opposition to the crown's conciliating the Huguenots was eagerly supported by the Catholic followers of the king, who had pledged himself at St. Cloud to confine all grants of governorship to them.† The other prelates, however, thought the cardinal vehement and exaggerated. They were fully satisfied by the declaration which Henry had recently (July) made, in answer to the accusations and anathemas of the Papal nuncio. Henry therein declared that he felt no repugnance to any set of men or of doctrines, and was desirous that a holy *concile* should be held to decide and instruct him in these matters, until which time he would allow no change to be made in the position of the Catholic Church. The Duke of Luxemburg was at the same time sent to Rome with proffers to the Holy See. And the Catholic prelates of his party, thus mollified and encouraged with hope of Henry's conversion, sanctioned an edict which he issued from Tours (August 8th), revoking the late iniquitous order of his predecessor, and restoring the relative state of the two religions established by the edict of January.‡

* The MSS. De Mesmes, 8931, 8, contains a report of this meeting, with Bourbon's speech.

† After the battle of Ivry, Henry, from these stipulations, was obliged to refuse the governorship of Mantes to Sully, though Mantes was at his very door, and Sully was most trustworthy and serviceable.

‡ Printed copy, MSS. Fontanieu, 404–5. Henry's letters, t. iii., especially that to Montmorency of July 7. Ottywell Smith writes to Burleigh, that Henry entertained

CHAP. XXVI.

If Henry had had difficulties, his antagonist, the Duke of Mayenne, encountered a still more embarrassing number. The intervention of the Prince of Parma had saved the League from extinction, but had scarcely set it on its legs. The death of the Cardinal of Bourbon rendered the election of a new king necessary, and Mayenne, who shrank from coming forward himself, knew not whom to propose. He despatched President Jeannin to Spain, where that negotiator learnt to his surprise that Philip would hear of no monarch, save his daughter the infanta, whom, moreover, he proposed marrying, not to a French prince, but to the arch-duke Ernest. Jeannin, who knew that the country would never accept such a solution, even though the new sovereign brought the Low Countries with her as a dowry, thought it expedient not to state this to the Spaniards, lest they should withhold all aid, and left Philip in the fool's paradise of deeming France his own.†

Under the same appearance of friendship and support, Paris was as inimical as Philip to Mayenne. The departure of the legate Caietano left the *Sixteen* without any control. Though denied legal authority, they still met, passed resolves, and were looked up to by the most turbulent of their fellow-citizens. When the siege had been raised, they sent a deputation to the Duke of Mayenne, then engaged in the siege of Corbeil, begging him to restore the Council of Union, to get rid of Villeroy and those servants of the late king who still held communication with Henry of Navarre, and to appoint some other tribunal than the parliament, the judges of which threatened to take cognisance of acts of violence or illegality committed during the extremities of the siege. When the duke could not accede to these requests, and some of his council were for punishing the delegates, these sought

the idea of declaring a patriarch in France if the pope continued hostile.

S. P. France, 98.

† Mathieu, t. ii.

access to the Prince of Parma, in order to appeal to him against the duke. But the latter took care to prevent them reaching his presence.*

Early in 1591 the king made an attempt to surprise the capital. He was encouraged by the leaguers having failed in an attempt upon St. Denis, in which the Chevalier d'Aumale, one of their bravest partisans, was slain. A body of royalist soldiers came to the Porte St. Honoré, each bearing a sack of corn. In this guise they hoped to pass. But the Parisians had had warning, and the gate was blocked up. The danger and alarm served the democrats, by obliging Mayenne to leave as a garrison in Paris the 2000 lansquenets that the Prince of Parma had left behind, and whose presence emboldened the Sixteen.†

The escape of the young Duke of Guise from Tours increased their boldness and their independence of Mayenne. Although Farnese had left that commander the better part of his expeditionary army, the latter had not been able to prevent the king from taking Noyon.‡ Henry, after its capture, marched into Lorraine to receive the German troops, which had been raised for him by the Viscount de Turenne. Mayenne was, at the same time, joined by a Papal army under the Pope's nephew, the Duke of Montemarciano. The legate who accompanied it pressed Mayenne to acknowledge the Papal authority as supreme. But the Pope's army was as evanescent as his scheme of ambition, for having been passed in review, says Villeroy, "it melted away, and proved of no service."§ Henry honoured with his

* Palma-Cayet.

† Cayet; Panigarolo.

‡ The siege of Noyon is related in MSS. Baluze, 9675.

The Duke of Mayenne's letter to the Bishop of Plaisance is in MSS. de Mesmes, No. 8931, 7. The Prince of Parma had taken but his light cavalry and three regiments of infantry. Two regiments left with Mayenne, those of Arenberg and Barlemont, quitted him indeed under the pretext of not being paid. Although Mayenne was, as Panigarolo says, more à l'Espagnole than French, he was not popular with the soldiers of either nation.

§ Mathieu.

CHAP. XXVI.

presence the marriage of Turenne with the heiress of the Duchy of Bouillon, of which he assumed the title, Henry adding to it the rank of marshal. This principality and dignity conferred upon a Huguenot raised the jealousy of the Catholic followers of Henry to the highest pitch, and produced in them a sensible lukewarmness to his cause. Biron especially, who was not yet put in possession of his promised county of Perigord, felt what he considered the neglect.

Protestant auxiliaries, however, proved the chief strength of Henry. One English army, under Norreys, was opposed to the Spaniards in Britanny; it was ill supported, the French refusing them a town to retreat to in winter, and even cavilling with their Protestant worship in the places where they were quartered.* Though complaining that Henry with such aid had not driven a handful of Spaniards from Britanny, Elizabeth consented in July 1592 to send another army of 4000 men to Normandy, under "a commander dear to her," the Earl of Essex, "who needed the bridle rather than the spur." † She, at the same time, strongly recommended the siege of Rouen and the opening of the Norman ports. Henry, in consequence, sat down before that city on the 26th of November, although it was not till the 9th of December that the lansquenets, already mutinying for want of pay, could be induced to join in the operations of the siege.

The threatened conquest of Normandy alarmed the Parisians. One of the causes of reproach to Mayenne was, that by breaking up the Council of Union, he had dissolved the League between the different towns of the faction, who sent no delegates, and concerted no measures in common. They took steps to restore this accord and federation, Mayenne not preventing it, and the council began to meet again. Encouraged by a message which the King of Spain sent through Father

* Norey's letters. S. P. † Eliz. to Henry. S. P. France, 98.

CHAP. XXVI.

Mathieu, they drew up and forwarded an address to that monarch, praying him to give the infanta in marriage to the young Duke of Guise, as the prince best fitted to wear the crown of France.* To counteract this attempt of the democratic party, the moderates or the *politiques*, as those Catholics were called who looked to a reconciliation with Henry, entered into relations with the royalist officers at St. Denis. A messenger from this party having been discovered, the democrats clamoured for his punishment; but the parliament and its first president, Brisson, acquitted and liberated him. In a skirmish without the walls about the same time, Belin, the governor of Paris for the Duke of Mayenne, happening to encounter Crillon in the hostile ranks, lowered his arms to embrace his old comrade. The Sixteen were scandalised with this fraternisation. They met and plotted, resolved forcibly to put down the moderates, and to begin the work with knives (*jouer du couteau*). Marching in arms on the morning of the 15th November, they seized the first president, Brisson, as he was going to the palace with Larché and Tardif, his brother judges. Bringing them to the Petit Chatelet, they summoned the public executioner, and compelled him under threats of death to behead the three judges in one of the apartments of the prison. The execution accomplished, the bodies were brought forth and suspended before public view on the Place de Grêve.

No sooner were tidings brought to the Duke of Mayenne at Laon of this sanguinary deed, than he hastened to the capital, bringing the few troops with him on which he could depend. He was at first in doubt how far the conspirators had the support of the Spanish envoy and garrison. He therefore accosted them with a countenance of no vehement anger. Lulled by his dissimulation, they were thrown off their guard, and on

* Mém. de Villeroy.

CHAP. XXVI.

the 4th of December Mayenne seized four of the principal amongst them, caused them to be carried to the Louvre, and there hanged in the *salle basse*, now occupied by the gallery of statues. Bussy Le Clerc, one of the most culpable, kept himself guarded in the Bastille, of which he was governor, nor did he surrender it till he had received a safe conduct. The moderates for the time resumed their ascendency in Paris, the colonel of the city militia being of that party, and readily joining the parliament in putting down the tyranny of the Sixteen.*

Whilst Mayenne was crushing the chiefs of the Parisian democracy, Henry was forming the siege of Rouen. Although the commander in the town, M. De Villars, far from being a fanatic leader, was an admirer of Henry the Fourth, and had sought to come to a previous understanding with the royalists, he still conducted the defence with indomitable spirit. He had prepared for being besieged by collecting an immense quantity of provisions, for though Henry's partisans were in possession of the course of the river and of the principal approaches, they allowed carriages to pass on being paid for the permission. This want of honesty or sincerity in his followers, which had already enabled Paris to hold out against Henry, now afforded even more facilities to Rouen. The severity of the siege fell upon the English, whose prowess Sully has recorded. But instead of directing his own and their efforts against the old walls of Rouen, Biron, who had the chief command, persisted in first reducing the Fort St. Catherine, which Villars defended with the utmost intrepidity and skill. The citizens, too, rivalled their brother leaguers of Paris in constancy and fanaticism, the priests making the same display of zeal and indulging in the same extravagance of ceremony and

* L'Estoile, Villeroy, De Thou, Nevers, Cayet, MS. de Mesmes, Registres du Parlement, and de la Ville. Satyre Menippée.

processions. Rouen, however, like the metropolis, could only be saved from the monarch who beleaguered it by the Prince of Parma again marching into the centre of France. The Spanish king had received so few advantages from his first interference, Mayenne, instead of displaying gratitude, having hanged the partisans of his crown, that the prince now required some more definite and solid concessions than the chiefs of the League had yet made.

In December, 1591, the Prince of Parma crossed the French frontier with his army, and proceeded to Guise, where he found the young duke of that name with his mother and the Bishop of Piacenza. They expressed their discontent of Mayenne and were in great straits for money, the old duke having wasted the family property, and Champagne, a poor country, being still more impoverished by the war.* Farnese gave them 6000 crowns in lieu of the 20,000 they expected, in order to prevent the duke from "giving himself to despair."† Mayenne joined the prince at Guise in the worst possible humour, complaining of his envoy, Ibarra, for having favoured the Seize, and of Spain for refusing to continue to him the disposal of the 600,000 crowns monthly, which he had hitherto enjoyed. He had made over the fortress of La Fere to the Prince of Parma, with liberty to put what garrison he pleased, and they spent Christmas together in that town. The prince's purpose was, as he informed Philip, to introduce as many Spanish soldiers as he could into Paris, as well as into Orleans.‡

Towards the middle of January solemn conferences took place between President Jeannin and La Chatre, representing Mayenne, and the Spanish envoys, Ibarra and Richardot. The demands of the former were the

* The gentry of Champagne, who held for Henry, are represented as so poor, as to be obliged to sell their horses. Letters, De Mesmes, 8431, 9.

† His letters to Philip the Second, MSS. Bethune, 8476, p. 62, dated Nesle, January 15, 1592.

‡ Ibid.

CHAP. XXVI.

march of the Prince of Parma to raise the siege of Rouen and the immediate payment of 4,000,000 livres. Ibarra asked, as the price of these succours, the instant summoning of the estates, and the election in parliament of the infanta as Queen of France. Mayenne had represented at La Fere that it would be dangerous to summon the estates, without first winning the chief personages, and being well provided with money for the purpose. The Spaniard thought that the lieutenant-general and the Parisians might anticipate the estates in proclaiming the infanta. To refuse was to lose Rouen, and Mayenne's negotiators consented to the acknowledgment of the infanta as queen, on the condition that she should come and reside in France for six months, and then choose a husband with the consent of the council of chiefs. She was to observe the laws of the kingdom, put no foreign garrison in its towns, and ten millions were to be spent by Philip in two years for the support of the throne. For this pecuniary arrangement, the Spanish envoy substituted the payment of but 4,000,000 and the supply of an army of 20,000 foot and 500 horse for two years.*

The negotiations were interrupted by the approach of Henry. He left some 12,000 infantry under Biron to maintain the blockade of Rouen, and marched with 9000 horse and arquebusiers to reconnoitre, and, if possible, engage the army of Farnese and Mayenne. They mustered 20,000 infantry and 5000 horse, and marched in order too admirable to be surprised. Henry came up with them near Aumale, marching from Amiens to Neufchâtel in the first days of February, and was amused to see the Prince of Parma, with his gouty limbs swathed, carried about in an open carriage, and thus performing the office of general. Henry had four squadrons of cavalry with him, but seeing the Spaniards

* Letter of Prince of Parma and Duc d'Ibarra to Philip the Second, both in MSS. De Mesmes, 8931.

protected by their waggons, and their artillery playing upon him through the interstices, he dismissed the greater number which followed him, and, retaining about 120, hoped thereby to draw forth the enemy to a skirmish. He had previously ordered Lavardin to support him with 500 arquebusiers; that officer brought but eighty, and the Spaniards seeing Henry's force so small came out in a large body. There ensued a brief but unequal combat, in which the king showed even more than his wonted bravery, but in which he was worsted, wounded, and compelled to leave sixty of his followers on the field, "of his bravest though not his grandest."

The king, obliged to withdraw for a time to have his wound healed, learned the still worse tidings that, during his absence, Villars had made a sortie from Rouen, and surprised at Darnetal the lansquenets who had the guard of the guns and ammunition. These he blew up, and penetrating into the trenches from behind, killed the three or four hundred who mounted them, and proceeded to destroy the works. The brothers, De Piles, young sons of the captain, who had perished at St. Bartholomew, alone stood on the defence, and with a group of brave comrades around them perished, and so gave time for Biron to come to the rescue. It was too late; the destruction was completed and the guns brought off, Biron himself being wounded in his efforts to redeem the loss. The Prince of Parma and Mayenne approached within four leagues of Rouen. They found, however, Henry there nearly cured of his wound, and strengthened by some 3000 Walloons, and a reinforcement of some 2000 English. Mayenne and Parma thought it imprudent to attack the king, at least until they had weakened his army by artifice, and deprived it of those troops whose impetuous attacks they most dreaded. For this purpose, they feigned a retreat, and gave the appearance of an intention to abandon the attempt to raise the siege. This, however, they did not effect until

CHAP. XXVI.

they had succeeded in throwing 800 men into Rouen to reinforce Villars, with, no doubt, a certain quantity of provisions. They then withdrew in considerable haste beyond the Somme, pursued by Henry, who congratulated himself on a campaign so bootless to the enemy, and falling so short of the rescue of Rouen. But no sooner had the king returned to the camp than he was assailed by the demands and declarations of the mounted gentry, that the Prince of Parma having withdrawn to Flanders, and no longer a chance of an engagement, they must return home to refresh themselves from fatigue and expense. Henry had sufficient foot, they said, to prosecute the siege. To this general defection the lukewarm Catholics such as D'O and the Cardinal of Vendôme were no strangers. They had the indecency, after the successful sortie of Villars, to object to the burial of the two brothers, De Piles, who had fallen there so gloriously, in any of the cemeteries within the king's quarters. They were Huguenots, and the interment of heretics could not be suffered. There was as much treason as bigotry in this objection, which was intended to hasten the dispersion of the army, and thus afford the opportunity which was sought for the Prince of Parma and Mayenne, with whom Vendôme and D'O were no doubt in intelligence.* Henry, unable to retain his cavalry, saw them disperse. The Prince of Parma and Mayenne, instantly informed of events, hurried back from the Somme, and in three days' march brought their large army within sight of Rouen. Henry had but his foreign foot and reistres. He was, in consequence, compelled to withdraw, the Prince of Parma making his entry into Rouen on April 20, 1592.†

The more honest and loyal of the gentry who had deserted Henry's standard, thinking the campaign over,

* Elizabeth asked Henry, was it true that his Catholic followers refused to capture Rouen. Her letter. S. P.

† Sir H. Unton's letters. S. P. France, 102.

were shamed as well as surprised by the Prince of Parma's sudden and successful return. They flocked back to the royal camp, and ere ten days had elapsed since the raising of the siege, Henry, was able to attack Prince's outposts near Ivetot. The English, under Sir Roger William, forced their way into the quarter of the Spaniards, who fled when it came to the "push of the pike."* The Prince of Parma saw again that formidable cavalry, whose encounter he dreaded, roam around his camp. Mayenne had, contrary to the Prince's custom, stationed some 2000 Walloons in a wood outside his camp entrenchments. Young Biron attacked them, put them to the rout, and took their baggage. From the 10th to the 18th of May, Henry's generals, day after day, carried some post and cut off some detachment, till the Prince of Parma, forgetting his wound, and dispensing with the care and repose it required, himself undertook to rescue the combined army from the assaults of the king. He brought it back to Caudebec, on the Seine, which he had captured after the relief of Rouen. And whilst Henry surrounded him, and felt certain to reduce by force if not crush him by assault, the prince caused a number of boats and planks to be floated down to him from Rouen, passed the Seine, very wide at that part, in the night, and completely escaped the royalist army.

Baffled and mortified at this clever escape of his foe, Henry hoped to redeem it by ascending the river, crossing it at Pont de l'Arche or Vernon, and getting between the Prince of Parma and Paris, so as to compel him to accept battle. With officers and an army completely at his disposal, Henry would have pursued this plan. But even he acknowledged the necessity of allowing the mounted gentry to go home. The English

* Unton.

CHAP. XXVI.

and Dutch were also disinclined to pass the Seine and enter upon a campaign so far from the seaports. Such of the Catholic royalists as had returned, either declared it too late, or thought it inexpedient to intercept and fight the Prince of Parma. And it would appear they were right, for the prince reached the vicinity of Paris in three or four days. There remained, therefore, but to dismiss the feudal portion of the army and disperse the rest.*

This repeated discomfiture, in two successive campaigns, of the king's efforts to make himself master of the great northern capitals, proved a death-blow to the prospects of Henry, at least as a Huguenot prince. His best means of winning an undisputed crown was as a triumphant general in the field. This, notwithstanding his heroism, he failed to show himself. However irresistible in a battle fought after French habits, and decided by fierce and general encounters of mounted gentry, he was unable to cope with the Spanish and Italian tactics of the Prince of Parma, whom he could not force to action, except at a great disadvantage, nor prevent, even with an army equal in numbers, from relieving the large cities which Henry in vain besieged.

The failure of the royal arms and the success of the Spanish, induced almost all the Catholic lords, who had followed Henry the Third against the League, now to waver in their allegiance to Henry the Fourth. The defection of his own relatives, Vendôme and Soissons, has been mentioned. The Duke of Nevers was always a trimmer, and the Duke of Longueville, and even Marshal D'Aumont, now made a second overture to the League and the party of Mayenne. The events of the war in the different provinces during the remainder of 1592 were not calculated to encourage

* Henry's letters, Unton's, Sully, Cayet, De Thou, &c.

the partisans of Henry. After the retreat of the Prince of Parma to the Low Countries, the veteran Marshal Biron was slain at the siege of Epernay. In the south, Lesdiguières indeed defeated the Duke of Savoy, other French towns and commanders marring the selfish designs of the greedy prince. But in Britanny the royalist commanders, the Prince of Conti and Dombes, suffered a signal defeat from the Duke of Mercœur, with the loss of their artillery. Some three hundred English perished on the occasion, and this slaughter of her subjects, added to that already experienced at the siege of Rouen, so indisposed Elizabeth, that she threatened to withdraw her troops and discontinue her succours.

Henry had sought consolation in the society of Gabrielle D'Estrées, but thick-coming tidings of evil disturbed his repose. The King of Spain, as well as the Pope, so pressed Mayenne to proceed to the election of a Catholic king, and to summon the estates at Paris for the purpose, that the duke was unable any longer to resist. Should this assembly elect the Duke of Guise, for example, and the Spanish king give him the infanta in marriage, whilst the Pope sanctioned it, as well as their coronation, Henry would inevitably find himself deserted by those political Catholics who had hitherto followed his standard.* His ill success had wearied and indisposed his allies, and there was every prospect of his power and influence being confined to Guyenne instead of extending over the kingdom. In this threatening aspect of things, Henry took counsel of his most attached followers, Sully and Duplessis-

* Guise having quitted the army, and proceeded to Paris, Mayenne feared it was to plot against him, and wrote to defeat it. His letter of April 5, and MSS., Sup. Francais, 3981. It would be idle recapitulating, after Villeroy, that clever negotiator, the demands of Mayenne and the League, which amounted to no less than the possession of every province of France, the Catholics of Henry's own army being more anxious to share with them than oppose them.

CHAP. XXVI.

Mornay. Even these sincere Protestants frankly admitted that the only way of the king's meeting the impending storm was to avert it by offering to resume the Catholic faith. To ensure the success of even this extreme step was not facile. The Pope had made himself the instrument of Spanish ambition, and declined even to listen to the king's offers or protestations. The leaguers demanded no less than all the provinces of the kingdom. The estates were convoked for the month of January, for the especial purpose of electing a Catholic sovereign, and the Duke of Feria had been despatched thither by Philip to represent him and support his interests. The better class of citizens and the judicial orders were for summoning Henry to be converted, but these *semonneurs*, as they were called, were too much afraid of the Spanish faction and the Papal legate to take a decisive step. Henry, blending coercion with mildness, took "and garrisoned St. Maur, the bridge of Charenton, the fort near Meaux, and secured the wood of Vincennes." * This was one of the great pleas of the moderates, who represented a truce with Henry as indispensable for procuring provisions. But the zealots declaring a Spanish army would do that for them, defeated at first all offers of conciliation.

The Duke of Mayenne contrived to play a double and irresolute part. The death of the Duke of Parma in December, from the consequence of the wound received before Rouen, had deprived him of that most able military support. He negotiated, but concluded nothing with Henry. And yet the solemn declaration which he issued in December†, and communicated later to the estates, seemed not to preclude accommodation. The Catholics of the League, he said, had repeatedly

* MSS. De Mesmes, 11,8931.

† Mayenne's Declaration proclaimed by sound of trumpet, Jan. 3rd. It is published in the Etats de 1593, by Bernard. Doc. Incd.

summoned Henry of Navarre to profess Catholicism, and had he done so in the reign of his uncle the Cardinal of Bourbon, he would have succeeded to the throne without dispute. But he always refusing even a conference, the Catholic nobles could but seek to exclude from the succession a heretic whom the Pope had excommunicated. The duke therefore besought the Catholic lords who still supported Henry to abandon him, and thus restore at once peace and unity to the kingdom. By the advice of Villeroy, the Catholic royalists thus addressed, replied by demanding a conference*, Henry having informed one of their chiefs, that he had made up his mind to be converted. The king followed up this demand by a declaration issued on the 29th†, stating that whilst he had hitherto demanded a *concile*, or assembly of prelates, for his instruction and conversion previous to his taking the latter step, he was now willing to adopt a less tedious mode of accomplishing that act.

On the 26th of January, 1593, the Duke of Mayenne opened the estates.‡ Of the 128 elected, 50 of them were clergy, and 55 deputies of the commons; not half the number were present. Marseilles was the only town of the south which had sent a member. The benches of the noblesse were empty; and Mayenne sought to supply their place by his own councillors, by the high functionaries, and legists. As the Parliament demurred to delegating members for that purpose lest their presence might deprive the judicial body of the power of registering and sanctioning the decisions of the estates, the Duke of Mayenne observed that he required their attendance solely for the capital affair of electing a king, and not for participating in the general business.§

* January 27, 1593, MS. De Mesmes, 4,8777.

† Mémoires de la Ligue, tom. v.

‡ Etats Généraux, tom. xv.

§ Messrs. Poirson and Martin state, that this innovation of May-

CHAP. XXVI.

Mayenne's first care was to communicate to the estates the demand of a conference made by the royalist Catholics. Although the cardinal legate and his coadjutor were for whipping the messenger and referring the message to the Sorbonne, the estates entertained, though they did not yet answer, the demand; and the duke, thus leaving the two parties at strife, but unable to come to a conclusion, set off for his army and for a decisive interview with the new Spanish envoy. His great fear was, lest this agent, who had come round by Lorraine, should embrace at once the interests of the young Duke of Guise, and provide him with a military force wherewith to strike a blow and establish his reputation. He met Feria at Soissons on the 12th, and soon perceived how impracticable were his views. The Duke of Parma had done so much for the French League, and gained so little in return, that the Duke of Feria now insisted on previous performance. He demanded to be assured of the election of the infanta, before the large army was introduced and payments made, the promise of which Spain had held forth. "The Spaniards will not help me," wrote Mayenne,† "except on conditions that are impossible. I get but 18,000 crowns a month. I have but 4000 foot and 600 horse. The Papal troops are but 1000. Far from assuming the offensive, what I have cannot suffice for the defence, as the king is aiming at the capture of Orleans." The Spanish court was without money. The greater portion of what Feria brought with him was in bills payable a year hence. Such members of the

enne was at once rejected by the estates. The assembly, however, seem to have taken slight notice of it at first, and it was not until the 28th of May that they decided that the councillors and judges, non-elect, should have power to offer advice only, not join in passing resolutions. Villeroy evidently mistakes in saying this was done at first.

† Letter to Commander Diou, at Rome, March 4th. MSS. De Mesmes.

estates as looked for Spanish subsidies refused them in this shape; and there was no more ready money than sufficed to supply Mayenne's immediate wants, and those of the more hungry democrats of the Paris municipality.* Mayenne affected content with the payments made him†, and promised to support the election of the infanta, which he allowed Feria to proceed to Paris to accomplish alone. The latter in return reinforced the army of Mayenne by 6000 men under the Count of Mansfeld, and both immediately sat down before Noyon.

The Duke of Feria had his solemn audience of the estates on the 2nd of April. He recapitulated the succours which the King of Spain had repeatedly given to the Catholic cause, and especially to Paris, with the sums that he had expended, and wound up by entreating them to elect a thoroughly Catholic sovereign. Although the desire of Philip was thus ambiguously expressed, it was known to the estates that he required the election of the infanta, in the teeth of the salic law, with the liberty of subsequently choosing her own husband.‡

This arrogance came in marked contrast to the conciliatory offers of Henry. And no sooner had the Spanish envoy withdrawn, than, in lieu of discussing his demands, the estates consented to the conference with the royalists, a decision which Mayenne himself had recommended.§ The zealots and the Sixteen exerted themselves to prevent the meeting. They obtained a condemnation of it by the Sorbonne, whilst the preachers made it the subject of their daily anathemas. But as the capital became more and more straightened for provisions, whilst the armies did not advance to

* Simancas Papers, Philip's correspondence quoted by Poirson.

† Which amounted to 140,000 crowns, part payment of 600,000. Envoy of Savoy's letter to his master. MSS. De Mesmes, 12,8981.

‡ Letter of Feria to Idiaquez. MSS. De Mesmes, 11,8931.

§ Villeroy.

CHAP. XXVI.

its succour, the desire for holding the conference prevailed. Mayenne and Mansfeld had succeeded in taking Noyon, but this trifling success, instead of encouraging them to march to rescue St. Denis, as the Parisians insisted, was the signal for their separation, nay, of Mayenne's troops deserting him, and Count Mansfeld, "who had not a sou,"* withdrawing within his own Belgian frontier.

The conferences of Suresne opened on the 29th of April, between twelve commissioners on either side. Epignac, Archbishop of Lyons, Villeroy, and Jeannin were the chiefs of the Parisian deputation; the historian De Thou, Schomberg, and De Baune, Archbishop of Bourges, the principal persons who represented the king. The result of their third meeting was the conclusion of a truce for Paris and its vicinity, which allowed provisions to pass on the payment of certain duties. In the negotiation which ensued, the archbishops were the speakers, he of Lyons directing his eloquence to show that a heretic king could not reign, and that final peace could only be preserved by his Catholic partisans quitting him. This was met by Henry's offers of conversion, which he had formally despatched to the Pope through the Grand Duke of Tuscany. The king had also personally announced this to D'O, but recently returned from Paris, where he had frequent interviews with the leading men.† The Archbishop of Lyons pleading that the Pope could be the only judge of the validity and sincerity of Henry's conversion, the progress of the conference was brought to a stand. The estates wavered; the people clamoured for peace.‡ The Duke of Feria demanded to make new proposals, and these were received on the 14th of May by a commission, of which the Duke of Mayenne was chief.

* Letter of Mayenne to Diou, April 1st. MSS. De Mesmes, 11,8131.

† L'Estoile.

‡ Dinterville to Nevers. MS. Bethune, 9120.

The Spanish envoy promised 10,000 men to relieve Paris within a month, 10,000 more in September; and in addition to this, Philip the Second would pay the 10,000 men of Mayenne, provided his daughter was elected queen.

The news of these large proffers of aid was immediately carried to Mantes, where the royal quarters were, and the king, in fear of their being accepted, instantly (on the 15th) issued decrees for the convocation of a council of prelates, as well as of an assembly of nobles and dignitaries, to meet at Mantes in two months. He offered to prolong the truce for that period, and the Protestants were summoned to send a statement of the guarantees which they would require under a Catholic sovereign.

The Duke of Mayenne, who had received the first offer of the Duke of Feria on the 14th, did not think fit or find time to communicate it to the estates till the 28th; but two days previous, on the 26th, he wrote to the Duke of Mercœur, the League chief of Britanny,* that "Peace with the pretended king was necessary. Our intelligences weaken," added he, "our means diminish, our divisions are notorious." In previous letters he had depicted the deputies of the estates as impoverished and discontented for want of funds, and the Spanish minister as too necessitous to pay either them or the army. Mayenne, therefore, saw the recognition of Henry as inevitable, but he still expressed his hopes to Mercœur, that the League would be maintained and the towns retain their attachment to the union. In other words the Duke of Mayenne was prepared to accept Henry the Fourth, as he had done Henry the Third, with the freedom and faculty for subsequently conspiring and rebelling, as circumstances might allow.

Although Mayenne had made up his mind that

* MSS. Baluze, 9675.

CHAP. XXVI.

Henry must be accepted, he had still appearances to preserve with the Spanish envoys, who seemed to be either marvellously ill informed of the opinions of the members of the estates, or else tied down by the instructions of their sovereign to insist on what was unacceptable. They augmented their offers of succour, and the Duke of Feria asked for a solemn audience of the assembly, in order to try the effect of his eloquence. For the purpose probably of overcoming the pertinacity of the envoys, and pointing out to them the only way of success, the deputies of the clergy and of the noblesse sent to ask the Duke of Feria whether, in case the infanta were chosen queen, she would promise to take a French prince for her husband. Could the Spanish envoy have answered this in the affirmative, it is possible the vote of the estates might have been for the infanta. Instead, however, of acquiescing in such a demand, the Duke of Feria, on the day of his solemn harangue, proposed the election of the Archduke Ernest of Austria to the kingdom of France, on the understanding that he should marry the infanta. Thus, instead of advancing or conciliating, the Spanish duke receded, and, from whatever cause, rendered the attainment of the object which he sought hopeless.

Immediately after this untoward proposition of De Feria (June 11) arrived from Mantes demands of the Catholic royalists for an answer to their proposals. The king had promised his conversion, convoked an assembly for the purpose, and offered a truce. The estates had deferred, rather than given a reply, alleging that the acceptation of Henry's conversion belonged to the Pope. His holiness, however, had refused to receive Henry's ambassador. It was for the estates therefore at once to declare would they have the truce, or would they have war?* This demand was most em-

* Letter of the King's Councillors to the Archbishop of Lyons. De Mesmes, 4, 8777, f. 143.

barrassing to the clerical and Spanish party. The sittings of the conference instead of being held at Suresne had been transferred to the vicinity of Paris. They took place at La Roquette, near the gate of St. Antoine, and subsequently at La Villette (June 12), in the house of De Thou. The Parisians crowded round the doors, and clamoured for the acceptance of the truce. They were the more urgent, as tidings had just arrived that Henry, angered by the rejection of all his proposals, had laid siege to Dreux, and was mustering forces for the investment of Paris itself.

This resumption of his military activity by the king alarmed Mayenne. He might be prepared to recognise a monarch who surrendered his creed and the cause of his fellow religionists, but to one triumphant in the field he shrank from submitting. He was also alarmed by his own growing unpopularity and that of the legate. He therefore rallied to the Spanish envoys, and representing to them the election of either the infanta alone or of the Archduke Ernest as impossible, persuaded them to consent to the simultaneous election of the infanta and a French prince. With this offer the Spaniards closed as far as their instructions would permit, and Feria, on June 21, proposed to the estates in the Louvre, that the infanta should be declared queen, on the express condition that the King of Spain should within two months select from amongst the French princes, those of Lorraine included, a husband who should reign *solidairement* with her. The immediate election of the queen, and adjournment of that of the king, instead of meeting the views of the estates, filled them with suspicion and alarm. The commission nevertheless offered to vote the simultaneous elevation of the infanta and her husband to be queen and king after the marriage and its consummation. This did not suit the views of the Duke of Feria, who knew that the infanta's election would not bear delaying. What he demanded

CHAP. XXVI.

was, however, rendered more impossible by the intervention of the parliament, which passed an *arrêt* against the transfer of the crown of France to a foreigner (June 28). The estates rejected the third proposal of the Spanish envoys, and Mayenne communicated it to them on the 3rd of July.

Piqued at the refusal, the Spanish envoys declared (July 5) that they could go no further, and that they could only consent to continue succouring the Catholic cause with troops and funds, on condition that the truce with Henry should be rejected and the injurious *arrêt* of parliament revoked. The envoys were, however, without money, and the troops had withdrawn behind the Belgian frontier, at the very moment when tidings came that Dreux had been carried by assault. The siege of Paris might be daily expected, and a renewal of all the horrors of famine. The people clamoured for the truce. At this extreme moment some of the ultra Catholics put forward the name of Guise. If the Spanish envoys could consent in their monarch's name to his betrothal to the infanta, the election of both might take place immediately and simultaneously. The Duke of Feria was not unwilling to grasp this, the last hopes of success. But Mayenne hesitated. Where were their powers, he asked? Feria was able to satisfy him by pointing out in his despatches the acceptation and coronation of Guise as an alternative that might be conceded.*

Mayenne did not oppose, but made large demands, the payment of 200,000 crowns of debt, 100,000 a year pension, 10,000 a month to pay troops, and Champagne for his son.† De Feria, who had but little money for the present, offered a great deal for the future. The young

* Mayenne told the Pope that the Spanish envoys could not really have had such powers or they would have produced them before, instead of making so many blunders. Letter of Desportes, his secretary, to the Pope, July 22. MSS. De Mesmes, 12,8931.

† Letter from the ambassador of Savoy to his sovereign, July 24 MSS. de Mesmes, 12, 8931.

Duke of Guise sought to compensate for their penury by promising the county of Joinville to his uncle, with the reversion of Burgundy, to pay his debts. Mayenne felt unable to resist, although indignant with the Spanish envoys for abandoning his cause to embrace that of his nephew. Even of his own immediate followers, all seem inclined to desert him save four; and the duke himself meditated the alternative of rushing to St. Denis, and flinging himself at the feet of Henry.* He shrank, however, from the humiliation, and made it a condition of Guise's coronation, that the Spaniards should at once bring forces to Paris and provide funds to defend it. The envoys being unable to comply with this request, the estates felt it would be to no purpose to elect the young duke.† He had felt assured of his elevation for a day or two.‡ But on the 24th the Duke of Mayenne, in presence of his nephew, informed the assembly that a royal election of any kind was not for the moment to be thought of, the question of the truce being most urgent.§ The declaration was made at the last moment, for the truce expired the next day‖ and notwithstanding the threats of the legate and Spanish envoys to withdraw, the *tiers état* and noblesse at once acceded to the recommendation of Mayenne, and gave him powers to conclude a suspension of hostilities on such terms as could be procured most advantageous to religion and to the people.

On the following day, Sunday, July 25, 1593, Henry the Fourth entered the great portal of the cathedral of St. Denis, accompanied by the officers and dignitaries of his court, the Cardinal of Bourbon, and the Archbishop

* Mémoires de Villars Houdan, the principal and most constant follower of the Duke. MSS. Colbert, 32.

† Letter of Miramont to Nevers, MS. Bethune, 9119.

‡ Letter of the secretary. MSS. De Mesmes, 12,8091.

§ Etats Généraux de 1593, p. 317.

‖ Letter from Paris. MSS. De Mesmes, 12,8931.

CHAP. XXVI.

of Bourges, with their clergy around him. Henry asked to be admitted into the bosom of the Catholic Apostolic and Roman Church, and thereon kneeling, professed his determination to live and die in the faith of that church, and renounce all heresies contradicting it; he at the same time gave a paper containing his public abjuration signed with his name. Conducted to the high altar, Henry confessed, received absolution, and heard mass.*

In the letter which Henry addressed to the Reformed Churches, he explains the reasons by which he arrived at the determination, much in the same words that his friend Sully excuses it. He found, he says, on examination, that a Christian might save his soul, whatever sect he followed, that of Catholicism or Protestantism, and that this essential difference between the religions being removed, he embraced that most conducive to his worldly interests, and to the peace of the kingdom. This profession of a loose and lukewarm faith, little accordant with the exclusive exigencies of the creed that he had embraced, may exculpate Henry as a politician, but not as a man of sincerity and honour. Henry, indeed, on another occasion described his recantation in terms which implied indifference if not irreverence. "I am about to take the *saut perilleux*," wrote he to Gabrielle, *saut perilleux* being the perilous and extreme feat which a mountebank performs as the climax of his agility. A wit could have said nothing more pertinent, a monarch nothing so disgraceful.

* Abjuration de Henry IV. Cimber and Danjou, t. xiii.

CHAP. XXVII.

FROM THE KING'S ABJURATION TO HIS DEATH.

1593—1610.

FEW people study or peruse the history of France, in the latter years of the sixteenth century, without being more interested in the personal fortunes of Henry the Fourth, than in the events decisive of the national creed, liberties, or political life. To most readers the abjuration of the king is the closing of the drama. It secured his rights, humbled his ambitious, selfish, and bigot enemies, restored peace to the community, power to the monarchy. Almost all, even to the partisans of freedom of religion, are ready to clap hands at the king's success. Such admiration is too general to be unjust, the object of so much homage having so many claims to it. Even France seldom produced a warrior so brave, a gentleman so gallant, a prince so affable, so generous, so abounding in chivalrous sentiment, of ready wit and incomparable genius,—his letters as well as his words survive to attest this,—and withal, of that great good sense, which, though the least brilliant, is still the prime characteristic of the statesman.

Yet Henry's policy might have been more successful, as his character would have been more perfect, had they been marked by conviction and enthusiasm. His high birth and great vicissitudes, with his alternate rearing at one time with a pious mother, at another in the vortex of a dissolute court, had left him at bottom an Epicurean, whose chief aim was pleasure, but who

CHAP. XXVII.

was not without higher inspirations and a sentiment of loftier duties. But to set himself at ease, as a triumphant monarch, was his clearest purpose, his political knowledge not being extended enough to permit him to be the legislator as well as the conqueror of his people. The evils which had met his eye and marred his hopes for years were those of anarchy, the turbulence and disobedience of his subjects. With him, therefore, the restoration of government authority was the great want of the age. And he fully attained it. Henry the Fourth was the great restorer and establisher of the monarchic principle.

This, however, uncontrolled and unaccompanied by other powers, is the rudest kind of rule, that which offers itself when all other fairer and freer have failed, and which hence prevails in the first and in the last stages of national civilisation, ushering in its birth or heralding its decline. It is the regimen of social childhood, or political decrepitude, and certainly the greatest curse that can befall a nation in the age of still increasing force and not fully developed manhood. It was the fate of France to fall as irrecoverably under this absolutism, as if Philip the Second himself had effected the conquest of the country. But this was not the view nor the belief of either Henry or his subjects. The king himself was far removed from a despot. Although determined to preserve the unity of the kingdom, and preclude anything like political independence in the governors of provinces, he still gave to them large jurisdiction, influence, and revenue. To the parliaments he allowed their pristine authority; and though avoiding to summon the states-general, lest bigotry and intolerance might find a stronghold in them to interfere with his designs, Henry did not obstruct the meeting of provincial estates, or the maintenance of local privileges. In most of the towns of his kingdom he sanctioned not only their old municipal

liberties, but much which they had audaciously usurped during the civil war. In great cities, where there was a governor and a parliament, one species of authority counteracted the other, but in towns not so situated, such, for example, as Amiens or Marseilles, the burgesses formed a kind of republic, refusing to receive a royal garrison, and scarcely respecting the royal edicts.*

The civil and religious wars of the sixteenth century in France were thus not immediately destructive of liberties, many and various of which they not only allowed to survive, but strengthened. The misfortune was that these liberties were not linked together, and secured in a common bond. The king aimed at the establishment of political unity, because in it he saw the chief strength of the nation against the foreign foe. But social unity the statesmen of the day thought neither attainable nor desirable. In this respect the king's ideas were not advanced beyond those of the fifteenth century. He considered the military strength of the country to exist in the courage of its gentry, who mustering an army upon summons, were to be exempt from taxation. For revenue, the state was to look exclusively to the non-noble. Hence it became the duty and interest of the government to separate the classes, to narrow that which did not contribute to the revenue, and rigidly prevent the wealthy ignoble from becoming noble even by purchase. Thus the two great divisions of the nation, instead of being allowed to mingle and efface sharp and invidious lines of demarcation, were kept apart in different camps, the

* Vilipended as is the reign of Henry the Third, and in many respects deservedly, the French statute book is still full of many liberal edicts and regulations issued in his reign, and as the result of the estates, especially in favour of municipal liberties. La Conference des Ordonnances, Frerot. The Spaniards said, it was they who made Henry king of Amiens, since, before its capture and recapture, the privileges of the citizens made them more kings than the monarch. L'Estoile, Sep. 1597.

CHAP. XXVII.

legists and magistrates coming to form an intermediate but perfectly distinct one.

In a similar way the two religions were parked off in separate territories and towns, each lord, and more than lord, where it predominated, thus making intolerance a law, and placing the two religions in permanent antagonism, instead of bringing them into gradual accord. At the same time a general representative assembly of the nation was avoided which might have brought the jarring elements together, compelled them to respect each other's privileges, and taught them to seek in common those rights which would be profitable to all. Instead of this, each was taught to stand upon its defence against the other, which soon established a state of truce, not peace, certain to lead at no distant day to a struggle, in which might must absorb right, and which terminated, as history shows, by the French crown subjugating every class or creed that dared to resist or differ from it.

It would be unjust to make Henry the Fourth answerable for the result, accomplished for the most part after his time. His policy was merely practical, his aim that of dealing with things as they were according to the ideas of his age. And whilst each class and sect asked him for their separate privileges, he can scarcely be blamed for granting them. None petitioned for the convocation of the states-general, not even the Protestants, who felt they would be in a minority, and as such harshly treated. The nobles disliked a mode of assembly, in which the *tiers*, or commonalty, at first rivalled and then eclipsed them. Sully gives his own reasons for eschewing representative assemblies, which could be but the instruments of powerful kings, exaggerating their intolerance and their tyranny, and the dominators of weak monarchs, introducing anarchy and turbulence into the government, and permanent factions in the state. These

objections were not unfounded, and were naturally enough suggested to those who had seen England under the Tudors, and France under the Valois. The true virtue of representative assemblies and government lay in the seed and in the future. And Providence alone can be considered to have been able at this period to appreciate the hidden, and yet to be developed, value of such institutions.

However strong had been the general reasons for the king's conversion, that immediate urgency which drew him so precipitately to the foot of the altar at St. Denis was not so great as he fancied. Neither the estates nor Mayenne, as has been seen, were prepared to close with the Spanish proposals, or to elect Guise, without money for themselves, and the reinforcements requisite to defend the citizens of Paris from siege and famine. The members of the estates were merely anxious to get away, the Spaniards being no longer able to pay them. The truce therefore for three months was voted by them, and assented to by Mayenne, not in consideration of what passed at St. Denis, but from their own desire and necessity. The Spanish envoys and the Papal legate threatened to abandon the League and Paris altogether. To prevent this, and keep up the semblance of a party, Mayenne and the estates took an oath to maintain the union, resist heresy, and uphold the decrees of Trent, which forbade all toleration. In addition to this public engagement, the duke took a private one at the *Augustins*, swearing to the Spaniards that he would never recognise Henry until the Pope did so. The Spaniards agreed in return to support him with 14,000 men.* After giving this last proof of devotion to their principal and paymaster, the

* Mem. of Villars Houdan, and the correspondence in the MSS. de Mesmes. Memoirs of Villeroy, which state, that the king became fully informed of this by means of an intercepted despatch of the legate.

CHAP. XXVII.

members of the estates separated, putting an end to one of the vilest representative assemblies that ever disgraced a nation. Greedy merely for gold, and not true even to the hand that gave it, they had not the excuse of bigotry to cover the crime of selling their country to the stranger. If they failed to do so, it was not patriotism that forbade, but disappointed greed. The entire party of the League, citizens and nobles, were quite ready to sell themselves for a price. It is difficult to imagine that a prince of firm and honest conviction, whatever that might be, could not have triumphed over a pretended orthodoxy which was the merest selfishness, meanness, and corruption.*

Had Philip the Second been prepared with money and with troops, Henry's conversion would not have saved him; but the stores of bigotry were exhausted. The Pope, indeed, held out, and in obedience to the Spanish king†, refused all the supplications of the Duc de Nevers‡, whom Henry had sent to Rome. The Church party at the same time vainly suborned a man named Barrere to assassinate the prince whom it so much dreaded. The regicide was seized at Melun, and broken on the wheel; no punishment however seems to have been inflicted on the ecclesiastical power which had encouraged and suborned him.§ But the lay portion of the League at least gave proofs of its despair to uphold what had become a merely personal and selfish enmity. The governors of provinces had cause of fear, lest the citizens and magistrates, in the prospect of a renewal of the civil war, might return to their allegiance without them‖, and the principal amongst these accordingly

* The estates of the Ligue are sufficiently gibbeted in the Satire Menippée.

† Philip's envoy, the Duke of Sessa, threatened to starve Rome, and proceed to all extremities against the Pope if he absolved Henry. MSS. Colbert, f. 14.

‡ Discours de ce que fit M. de Nevers.

§ He was executed August 30, 1593.

‖ Sully.

began to negotiate with the king, under pretext of a truce. Vitry was the first. He surrendered Meaux upon Christmas eve.* Villeroy treated for himself and his son, Alincourt, who held Pontoise. He wrote to Mayenne in the first days of January, entreating that chief to make offers to Henry, and to make them openly, secresy having been his bane.† Mayenne was well aware of his danger, but could not shake off the ties which bound him to Spain. His hold of Paris was uncertain‡, being equally mistrusted by the judges and chief citizens now anxious to make their peace with the king, and redeem their past enmity to him, and by the Spaniards, who were supported by the armed democracy, and the survivors of the Sixteen.§ All that Mayenne could do was to hold the balance between them and play one against the other, allowing the moderates to choose city officers in their interest, and to fortify themselves with a burgess guard‖; at the same time, to please the Spaniards, he consented to change the governor, Belin, and to replace him by Cossé Brissac. These foreigners also demanded power for the new governor to exile the chiefs of the moderates, their objections to Belin being that he would not go this length. The alarmed magistrates protested, and the parliament passed an *arrêt* on the 14th of January, ordering the Spanish troops to quit Paris, and Belin to remain, for "if he went, the good burgesses would go with him."¶ La Châtre, in the meantime, surrendered Orleans, notwithstanding the letters and exhortations of the legate.** The Duc de Nemours had sought to make himself master of Lyons by erecting a citadel: but its archbishop, Epinac, joined in a plot with the citizens against his

CHAP. XXVII.

* Mathieu.

† His letters given by Cayet.

‡ Mayenne's letters to his agent Montpezat, at Madrid. MSS. Baluze, 9675.

§ De Thou.

‖ Palma-Cayet.

¶ Arrêt in MSS. Baluze, N. 9675.

** Their letters, MSS. Colbert, 14.

CHAP. XXVII.

enterprise, took Nemours prisoner, and shut him up in St. Pierre Encise. Epinac would then have held Lyons for Mayenne; but the citizens were weary of the League, and combining amongst themselves, delivered the town to Ornano, the general of Henry.*

It is remarkable that, at a time when the entire nation was gradually subsiding from turbulent independence to complete submission to the crown, every personage and party should appeal to the public and the press. There was a shower of pamphlets and printed pleadings, for the League and against it. Villeroy has left a lengthy apology of his conduct. Even soldiers deemed it advisable not to be silent. Vitry published a remarkable manifesto addressed to the noblesse, saying that "he had not abandoned the League till he saw that the Spaniards were cutting the kingdom piecemeal, they being much more ready with funds to purchase a personage or a town than to support an army." La Châtre, surrendering Orleans, not only gave his reasons to the citizens, but addressed the legate, telling him that the Franciscan monks were far more eager for money than zealous for religion.† Whilst Leroy, in the "Vrai Catholicon," lashed the Spaniards and the Parisian zealots, the latter retorted upon Mayenne in the "Dialogue between Maheustre and Manant," one of the most instructive documents of the time.

The Duke of Mayenne had despatched Montpezat to Philip the Second early in the year, to acquaint him that these defections were inevitable, and the party lost without immediate succour.‡ He complained of the indignities inflicted on him by the Duke of Feria. That Spanish agent openly preferred the young Duke of Guise, and in order to afford him an opportunity of

* Ornano's letters. MSS. Colbert, N. 11. Réduction de Lyon, ib.

† MSS. Colbert, 14.

‡ Mayenne to Montpezat, Feb. 4. MSS. Baluze, 9675.

distinguishing himself, now gave him an army, that he might strike a blow and achieve a reputation. Mayenne, hearing that this army, under its young leader, was at Ferté Milon, left Paris to its fate, and taking his family away with him, hurried to the Spanish camp.* Ere departing, he forced Brissac as a governor upon the Parisians, promising speedily to reinforce the 600 Spanish troops of the garrison with 2000 men, Brissac having in the meanwhile the support of some thousands of the enregimented population and students instead, whom the Spanish envoy furnished with food and pay.† Mayenne at the same time sought to tranquillise the chief citizens by assuring them that his aim, like theirs, was peace.

The prospects of Henry brightened every day. The news from the south was cheering. Lesdiguières held his ground against the Duke of Savoy. Aix and the parliament of Provence had defied Epérnon and declared for the king. Toulouse was well inclined, and the Duke of Montmorency, whom Henry created constable, answered for Languedoc and Guyenne. During 1593, the king feared for Britanny and Normandy, and implored Elizabeth, if not to give fresh succours, at least to leave him the English force and artillery still in France. But the queen was indignant at Henry's conversion, threatened the recall of her troops, and demanded possession of a fort at the entrance of the Somme.‡ When Villars however consented to treat for Rouen, and the

* Villars Houdan gives this reason for his departure.

† They were called *Minotiers*, for their being allowed a *minot* of corn daily.

‡ Henry's letters. Despatch of De Beauvoir. MS. Fontanieu, p. 426. Elizabeth's frequent demands for a town or fortress near to which she sent her troops, is universally construed by the French into a design to seize and keep these places. But the truth was, that without a town of their own, which they might provision and fortify, and seek refuge in, they were left, especially during the winter, destitute and exposed. See letters of Capt. Gould. Birch, vol. i. p. 88. Also those of Unton. See page 280.

CHAP. XXVII.

Paris magistrates offered to give up the capital, the monarch felt more independent. To show the Pope he was king in his despite, Henry came to be crowned with great solemnity at Chartres, amidst a large assemblage, both of nobles and prelates. (Feb.) Returning to St. Denis soon after the departure of the Duke of Mayenne, he received the overtures of the Parisians. The sheriff Langlois, the judge Lemaitre, and the provost of the merchants, and still more important, Brissac himself, the governor appointed by the Spaniards, came to an agreement with the king.

Before daybreak on the morning of the 22nd of March, the royal troops were admitted by the northern, eastern, and western gates. The plot was matured so hastily that not more than 4000 could be collected from the neighbouring garrisons, and from the gentlemen who attended the king. The most important attack was that by the north, through the Porte St. Denis, the Spaniards being stationed in that quarter. Vitry, who commanded it, succeeded in taking possession of the Rue St. Denis, which lay between their quarters. Being thus divided, they kept quiet, and made no effort in defence of the city. The only resistance was experienced by the division which entered the Porte St. Honoré, accompanied by the king. They encountered a troop of lansquenets 60 or 70 in number, and cut them in pieces.* The royal troops occupied the quays, the city, the palace. The king was met by the municipal authorities and the burgess guards, who clamorously saluted his majesty, and escorted him to the Cathedral of Notre Dame, where a Te Deum was instantly performed. As the monarch's cortége issued from the church, it found the people of Paris as loud in their acclamations of welcome as they had been

* Particuliers de la reddition de Paris. MS. Baluze, 9675. Mémoires de la Ligue, De Thou, Mathieu, Cayet, D'Aubigné, MS. de Mesmes, and letter from the Simancas Papers, published by Capefigue.

but a few years since in execration. But the words, amnesty and peace, banished every churlish feeling. The entire of the southern portion of the city was indeed reduced by the people themselves, and the magistrates who led them. The rabble and the students armed and paid by Spain attempted indeed to fortify themselves and make a stand in the *quartier Latin*, and a regiment of Neapolitans held the Porte Bussy. But the *Minotiers* were driven from the university, and the king having himself offered the Spaniards liberty to withdraw with their arms, the Neapolitans were included in the capitulation. On the eve of the same day, the 22nd, the troops of Philip the Second defiled through the gate of St. Denis. The Duke of Feria, with Ibarra and the Spanish commanders and ambassadors, were at their head, and saluted Henry, who was at a window to witness their withdrawal. "Recommend me to your master," exclaimed the smiling monarch, "but depart, and let us not see your faces again." The Pope's nuncio soon after withdrew to Montargis. The Cardinal Pellevé, the most furious partisan of the League and the Parisians, lost his reason on the shock, and died a few days after, raving mad. The king sent to assure his old foe, the Duchess of Montpensier, of his protection, and he even visited her to restore her confidence. Such treatment to the sister of Guise was holding the generous hand to the family. The persons exempted from the amnesty and banished from Paris amounted to only 120.

The League had indeed every reason for contentment. Their chiefs were largely paid, both in money and in power. Villars, who soon after gave up Rouen, received not the least share of these. Henry defended himself from the accusation of extravagance by saying that it would have cost him more to reduce these men by force, and that the revenue which they surrendered

CHAP. XXVII.

would pay the indemnities. The only parties who had cause of dissatisfaction were the Huguenots. On the submission of Paris, Henry published a declaration restoring to force the old edict of 1577, which forbade the reformed cult in the capital, or within ten miles round, and confined that worship in provinces not exclusively Protestant to the castles of lords, and the suburbs of one town in each district. This latter clause no Catholic governors in towns deigned to observe. It is therefore no subject of surprise that the university in a body expressed their gratitude by flinging themselves at the king's feet, whilst Duplessis-Mornay refused to come to court, the Huguenots summoning a meeting of their body at Fontenay.

To complete the reduction of the north was the first care of Henry. Abbeville had submitted soon after the towns of Normandy. Amiens and the other places of Picardy professed themselves ready to follow the example. But Mayenne was still in these provinces with an army of 10,000 Spaniards under Count Mansfeld. In June, Henry laid siege to Laon, the principal stronghold in their possession. Twice they strove to relieve it, and failed, the convoys being taken, and their guard routed. Laon surrendered on the first day of August, Amiens and all the towns of Picardy, save Soissons, La Fère, and Ham*, hoisting the royal standard.

The submission of the Duke of Guise followed these successes. He had at once to defend himself against Henry and against his uncle of Mayenne, who did not conceal his jealousy, and who wanted to introduce the Spaniards into Rheims.† Guise coming to expostulate with the Count of St. Pol, who was preparing to execute the orders of Mayenne, received such an insulting rebuff, that he killed him on the spot. He then treated with the king, demanding Burgundy, the grand-mastership of the palace, all the

* Rélation du Siége de Laon. MSS. Colbert, 32, and Henry's letters.

† Villars Houdan.

CHAP. XXVII.

abbayes of his uncle the cardinal, and the payment of his debts.* With the fickleness of his uncle, he offered to break off the negotiations, and receive 600 Spaniards into Rheims, if Philip the Second would strenuously aid him. But the Spaniard hesitated, and Guise gave up the town to Henry, receiving the government of Provence in lieu of Burgundy, the abbayes of St. Denis and Corbeil, and 400,000 livres to pay his debts. This affair retained the king in Picardy until Christmas. Two days after that festival he reached Paris, and immediately repaired to the lodging of Gabrielle D'Estrées. He was surrounded by a little court. Two gentlemen had just bent the knee upon reception, and Henry was stooping to raise them, when a youth of nineteen attempted to stab the monarch with a knife. The blow aimed at the heart struck the upper lip, in consequence of the king stooping, and merely displaced a tooth. The would-be regicide was Jean Châtel, a pupil of the College of Jesuits. A part of the usual education there had been the propriety of killing kings. The good fathers, who had hitherto held their ground in Paris, though fiercely attacked, and though refusing to recognise Henry, were now summarily ejected. And, as a kind of revenge upon bigotry, an edict abolished that incapacity and exclusion from office which Henry the Third had published against the Huguenots.†

Having spent 1594 in reducing the northern provinces of Picardy and Lorraine, the king determined to devote the next campaign to the conquest or reconquest of the east and south. Mayenne still held the towns of Burgundy; and Lyons itself was not safe from the attacks of the Duke of Savoy, and of a considerable army, which the constable of Castille was collecting at Milan. Bellievre wrote to the king from Lyons in

* MSS. de Mesmes. Mémoires de la Ligue, tom. xvii.

† This was renewing Henry the Third's Edict of Poitiers. De Thou, L. cxi.

CHAP. XXVII.

December, that it might be very well for him to linger in Paris in order to hold chapters of the Order of the Saint Esprit, but that in the meantime he risked the loss of Lyons, Forêt, Auvergne, Dauphiné, and Provence. The king's agent, D'Elbene, too, wrote from Rome, that if the king were in Lyons with an army, threatening Italy, he would be esteemed a much better Catholic at Rome, and be more likely to obtain absolution than if he remained in Paris.*

Henry was rendered fully aware of the unabated enmity of Philip the Second to him by the intercepted correspondence of the Court of Brussels with that of Madrid.† Whilst the Archduke Ernest and other councillors deemed Mayenne's cause and that of the League hopeless, Philip insisted on the continuance of hostilities. Henry in consequence put forth a formal declaration of war against Spain, January 1595. He flung one body of partisans into Franche Comté, and sent Biron with an army into Burgundy to reduce Mayenne, who took post at Chalons to await the forces about to join him from Milan. Beaune was the first town to admit the troops of Biron, Mayenne not having a man to send to its succour. The castle, however, held out. Auxerre and Dijon followed the example of Beaune. The constable Montmorency swept the course of the Rhone in despite of the resistance of the Duke of Nemours, and entered Lyons.

Whilst Henry was reducing the towns on the Soane, the Spanish army of Milan, under Velasco, constable of Castille, had crossed the Alps into Franche Comté; recaptured Vesoul, driving Henry's partisans from it; and, being joined by Mayenne, approached Dijon, where the royal army was still engaged battering the castle. The Spaniards crossed the Soane at Gray, and marched westward as if to intercept the king's communications

* MSS. de Mesmes. † MSS. Colbert, 32 and 33.

with the capital and the court. In hastening to meet them, Henry found himself in advance of his troops with not more than some hundreds of cavalry. The enemy fell upon him, but although they had 1000 foot and 2000 horse, the king charged them with but 200. Biron was wounded, and the king several times in imminent danger.* Mayenne, who knew his rashness, begged the Spanish commander to give him a regiment to attack and capture Henry; but Velasco would not believe that a monarch could so risk his dynasty and person, and not only refused, but withdrew across the Saone, leaving the towns of Burgundy to their fate.† This combat, known as that of La Fontaine Française, took place on the 8th of June. On the 17th, Henry purchased the surrender of the Castle of Dijon‡, which he wanted artillery to breach, with the consent of Mayenne, who had quitted the Spanish army in disgust, and consented to treat. As he insisted, however, upon retaining the government of Burgundy, which the king said "he had conquered at the price of life, and promised not to give back to the house of Lorraine," the negotiation failed for the moment.§ Henry entered Franche Comté with his army, hoping, it is said, to conquer the Spanish province and make it a kingdom for his son by Gabrielle.‖ The Swiss, however, protested that they were bound by treaties to defend the independence of Franche Comté, so that after having overrun the province, and reduced all its towns save Besançon, he abandoned the enterprise and withdrew to Lyons.

Serious events had taken place in the north during his absence, partly in consequence of his own faulty arrangements. The king was afraid to trust the command to one competent general. He was much harassed

* King's letters. Birch. f. i. p. 246.

† Mémoires de la Ligue, t. xix.

‡ Villeroy's letters to Nevers. MSS. de Mesmes. Henry found ammunition and stores in the castle worth the 8000 livres he paid.

§ Villeroy's letters of June 29. MSS. de Mesmes. Ibid.

‖ Sully.

CHAP. XXVII.

by the pretensions and wilfulness of the two Birons, father and son, by the caprice of the Count of Soissons; and even Turenne, whom he had made Duke of Bouillon, showed himself little trustworthy. Henry, in proceeding to Burgundy, deemed it fit to divide the command in the north, and entrust it to four persons, the Admiral De Villars, the Duc de Bouillon, St. Pol, and the Duc de Nevers, bestowing the supreme command upon the latter, who was a courtier and a political negotiator rather than a soldier. Of course the four disagreed, whilst a council of finance established at the same time in Paris differed with all. It began by ejecting Rosny from their sittings, as a personal favourite of the king, and therefore a spy upon them. There was nothing but division and mismanagement; and yet the first event of the campaign was a signal triumph for the king. The Spaniards, striving to filch Ham from the Duc d'Aumale, were anticipated by D'Humières, and there ensued a struggle, in which, although this chief was slain, Ham was won by the royal troops (June 20).

The Count de Fuentes, Spanish governor of the Low Countries, still succeeded in capturing Le Castelet, after which he laid siege to Dourlens. The four royal governors agreed to march to its succour, but had not reached the entrenchments of the besiegers, when they were attacked in flank by the Spanish army. The Duc de Bouillon, who was foremost, thought it prudent to retreat. Villars, on the contrary, stood valiantly to the combat, but being ill supported was surrounded and slain. The Spaniards then put Bouillon and St. Pol to the route, the king's army losing some of its bravest officers. The victors soon after took Dourlens by assault, and massacred all whom they found within, garrison and townsmen. Sully esteems the loss at 3000 men, and amongst them more nobles than fell at Coutras, Ivry, or Arques. The Spaniards were jubilant at this

victory, whilst the French attributed their disasters to the presence of their countrymen, the Duc d'Aumale and the Sieur de Rosne, in the camp of the enemy, to whom they brought that local knowledge of Picardy, its garrisons and roads, which was of so much importance.

Fuentes then laid siege to Cambray, a town held by Balagny, son of Montluc, Bishop of Valence, who had established a kind of sovereignty there, though lately induced to place it under the protection of Henry. The Duke of Nevers, alarmed at the disaster which threatened his military command, sent his son with what reinforcements he could collect into Cambray. Fuentes sat down before it with nearly 10,000 men, and battered it with forty-five pieces of cannon. Nevers, in despair, wrote to Elizabeth for 4000 men, were it but for a few weeks, imploring the queen by her beauty, as well as by his necessities. The queen, since Henry's conversion, was not to be won by French compliments. She replied to Nevers, that as to her beauty, time had carried off whatever she might once have boasted, and that to collect and embark 4000 men in such haste was a thing impracticable. How could the king, she asked, have gone off to the frontier of Switzerland leaving his towns, which were under the very beard of his enemy, totally unprovided? Had the citizens zealously supported the soldiers of the garrison, Cambray might have held out; but Balagny was hated, as an extortionate and petty tyrant, whose rule consisted in fleecing his subjects. They, therefore, seized an opportunity to rebel, and took possession of the great square, whilst the Spaniards assailed from without. Cambray in consequence was lost to Balagny and to the king (October 9th).

That prince had returned to Lyons in the latter days of August, and remained there more than a month employed in negotiating a truce with Mayenne, and an

CHAP. XXVII.

agreement with Epernon. He there received the important tidings that the Pope had at last granted him absolution. The Roman court had merely delayed it in order to extort hard conditions from Henry, such as the annulment of the tolerant edict of 1577, and the substitution for it of the decrees of Trent. The pope also required fresh abjuration and coronation, as well as pardon to the Jesuits. The king's envoys refused all these demands, but consented that the young Prince of Condé, presumptive heir to the crown, should be educated in the Catholic religion. The ceremony of Papal absolution took place on the 17th of September 1595.* Mayenne's submission followed. Henry granted Chalons and Soissons as towns of surety during six years, the payment of his debts, amounting to 377,000 crowns, which Mayenne ingeniously, it is said, stretched to a million. The duke was by a secret article to have the government of the Isle of France, Paris being excepted. In default of Burgundy, he had asked for Guyenne, which was also refused.† Though so long delayed, Mayenne's submission was sincere. Some months after, he came in person to pay his respects to the king at Monceau, when Henry took a malicious pleasure in walking the corpulent duke over the grounds. The latter, suffering from sciatica and fatigue, could proceed no farther. The king observing he had gone too fast, the duke replied that his majesty would have killed him had he continued his promenade. Henry struck him on the shoulder, and extending his hand exclaimed, "There, duke, I promise you, you shall never have greater ill or displeasure from me than this." "And I," said Mayenne, "will ever be your majesty's loyal subject and faithful servant." ‡

Amidst all, the pacification with Rome and with the

* Letters of Cardinal D'Ossat, t. i. 250. Traité de Folembrai.
† Birch's Elizabeth, vol. i. p. ‡ Sully.

chief of the League, and with the turbulent nobles in Provence and Languedoc, Cambray had fallen. Henry, instead of blaming himself for entrusting its defence to such a general as the Duke of Nevers, reproached that noble with his tardiness and incapacity, which had such an effect on the veteran diplomatist that he took ill. Henry, repentant, thought to do away with the too great impression which his words had made, by visiting his unfortunate general. But the duke sent word it was too late, and expired, recommending his son to the king.

The monarch hastened to Paris to raise funds to recruit his army. The parliament hesitated to sanction his demands for money, as it resisted his edicts for pacification and tolerance. Nothing can be so characteristic at once of the state of France and of its monarch, than the words which Henry addressed to the magistrates. Already, previous to his going to Burgundy, he had told them he took his departure worse provided than ever prince had been. "It is ye who kept me three months here, with what unfortunate results four months will tell. I restored you to your houses from the holes where you used to lie hid. I re-established you in your palace. But it was to take care of the public interest, not your own, and to draw venom from your hearts. But it is the nature of the French to dislike what they see. If you had me no longer, you would know what my loss might prove." On his return, the parliament, whilst still demurring to his edict for levying money, complained that he too rashly exposed his person. "I have no choice," replied Henry; "for if I do not expose myself no one else will. And my soldiers are all volunteers, whom I cannot force. If I had money to pay soldiers, I might depend on them, and send them forward without going myself. But I have no one. Those who join me go off in fifteen days. Give me money, and all will be right."

CHAP. XXVII.

By such energy and representations, Henry succeeded in raising 500,000 crowns*, besides the sums he had levied in the towns of Burgundy.† On his evacuating Franche Comté, the Swiss had promised him some thousands of their fellow-countrymen. With these and 3000 lansquenets, Henry strengthened the garrisons of Picardy‡, and laid siege to La Fère. An ordonnance of his, issued about the time, sought to check the disorganisation at once of his army and his finances.§ The former were to be paid monthly, but the royal letters show how short the execution fell of the intention. During the winter of 1595–6 the pacification of the south completed itself by the submission of the Duc de Joyeuse in Toulouse, and of Epernon, who took the government of Perigord in lieu of Provence. The most important acquisition was that of the town of Marseilles, for which the Spaniards offered large sums, but which its leading magistrates opened to the Duke of Guise, the royal governor of Provence. ‖ (Feb. 27.)

Philip the Second had made great efforts to provide the Archduke Albert, appointed governor of the Low Countries, and called by the French the Cardinal of Austria, with an army capable of resisting Henry. It was considerable, and the French king, fearing it might outnumber and overpower that with which he besieged La Fère, pressed the Protestant powers, Elizabeth of England, the Palatine, and the States of Holland, to send him aid. The zeal of all these allies in his behalf was much weakened by the terms on which the Pope had granted, and the king accepted, absolution ; for, though Henry cared little for what words he subscribed, the English and Germans could not consider them without sincerity or meaning. The English

* Letters of Forget to the Constable. MSS. Bethune, 9075.

† See, in Birch, the letter of Edmondes, who accompanied Henry on this expedition.

‡ Royal letters, t. iv. p. 507.

§ Réglement, dated Feb. 21, 1596.

‖ Discours de ce que s'est passé à la prise de Marseille. Lyon, 1596.

queen complained that the forces she had sent to Britanny had not been sufficiently attended to or supported.* Her troops had gallantly stormed the fort which the Spaniards had built at the mouth of Brest harbour, on which occasion the admiral, Frobisher, and Sir Anthony Wingfield, with many gallant Englishmen, were slain.† Notwithstanding this good service and the expense that Elizabeth incurred, the French commander, D'Aumont, would never allow them a place of refuge, or towns where they might winter and refit. The king, however, repeated his demand for succour with more than his usual earnestness when he learnt that the Archduke, instead of marching to the relief of La Fère, had turned westward, and laid siege to Calais.

Secretary Villeroy had even more indisposed the English queen towards France, than had the Maréchal d'Aumont. M. Lomenie had been to England in Sept. 1595, with orders to boast that King Henry was now independent, that he was reconciled to Rome, could make peace when he pleased, on favourable terms, with Spain, and that it was for England and Holland to come forward to lend their aid, in order to the king's persevering in the war, and rejecting the proffered peace. "If her majesty refused this, he, Henry, must provide himself as he might." "These letters being delivered, with many stout speeches, greatly offended the queen, who liked not to be terrified."‡ She had, year after year, lavished men and money upon Henry and his cause, which, in her opinion, had been weakly defended. The king's purchase of his crown by the desertion of his religious principles had deeply mortified her, as well as Burleigh; and both saw that France was drifting back, even under its Bourbon monarch, into the

* Birch's Elizabeth, v. i. p. 194, and Camden; also De Bouillon's negotiations in England. MSS. Brienne, v. 37.

† De Thou records the gallant conduct of an English soldier on this occasion, l. cxi.

‡ Birch, v. i. p. 327.

CHAP. XXVII.

arms of Spain and the League of Catholicism. Villeroy's threat confirmed such suspicions. The English were doubly menaced—remotely by Henry's defection, and immediately by the weakness and ill success of his arms, which allowed the Spaniards to master the maritime districts and towns both of Britanny and Picardy. In possession of those ports, England would be open to their enterprises, intrigues, and assassins, as well as menaced by their arms. On learning that Calais was besieged, and on being besought by its governor for succour, she had proceeded to make levies, which the Earl of Essex was appointed to conduct.* The queen had, indeed, not waited for the hour of peril. When Cambray was captured, and when Elizabeth had represented the impossibility of her succouring it, she offered to secure the maritime districts of France against the victorious Spaniards. Instead of accepting the offer, Henry sent for Flemish volunteers, of which mistrust Elizabeth loudly complained.† They proved insufficient; and the queen repeated her offer of 3000 men if Henry would allow them to make Calais "a place of retreat."‡ She sent Sir Robert Sidney with her message to the king at Boulogne, who rejected it with indignation. And in the midst of these jealousies and delays Calais surrendered to the Spaniards§, April 1596.

This misfortune was somewhat compensated by the

* Essex's Letters; Sir Roger Williams's Instructions. S. P. France, 115.

† Her Letters to Henry, of September 2 and 4, ibid.

‡ Birch. Burleigh's considerations in S. P. ibid.

§ On Elizabeth's first learning that Calais was besieged, she instantly sent orders to the Lord Mayor, who was attending a sermon at Paul's Cross, to raise soldiers, which he did from the congregation. For some reason or other they did not march until two days after Sancy's arrival, and then fresh orders were issued for levying soldiers from amongst the congregation gathered in church on Sunday. Such seems to have been the custom. The news of the surrender of Calais prevented their sailing. See Birch, vol. i. p. 462.

submission of La Fère; but Henry was struck with despair at his powerlessness to resist the Spaniards. He could muster a large force of mounted gentlemen for a short time, at the head of which he was sure to conquer if the enemy offered battle. But the Spaniards were too wary, and waited till the volunteers and gentry of their enemies dispersed. Henry could not rely upon native infantry. German lansquenets, English or Swiss pikemen, were alone formidable, and the services of these were not to be retained without money, which Henry's council of financiers could not procure for him. The king was as unfortunate in his diplomatists as in his financiers. Had frank communications taken place between the English and French courts, had Henry gone over, as he threatened, to Southampton or to Greenwich, a cordial and profitable alliance might have been the consequence, for the English court was in serious dread of the Spaniards.

But Henry had determined to make peace with Spain, and was now only anxious to dissemble with England, and maintain the alliance with it in seeming, lest his isolation should embolden the Spaniards to make harder terms.* In order to divert him from such intention, Sir Henry Unton was sent over towards the close of 1596, with offers of succour, if Henry would conclude an offensive and defensive alliance.† Henry met the offer at first by complaints; then by the demand of 12,000 men, declared his inability to cope alone with Spain, and his purpose "to take an unpleasing but necessary remedy." To his own ambassador in England Henry wrote, that he could not reject offers of peace from Spain, "in order to place himself in the power of those who have shown him so little affection, and merely sought to profit by his mis-

* Elizabeth et Henri IV. par Prevost-Paradol. Letters of Antonio Perez to Essex, S. P. p. 115.

† Sir H. Unton's Instructions. S. P. ibid.

CHAP. XXVII.

fortunes." * Still Henry despatched Sancy and De Bouillon to England to negotiate an alliance; whilst at the very time the Cardinal of Joyeuse was expected from Rome with propositions from the pope and from Spain.† His negotiation concluded the treaty with Elizabeth, by which she was to furnish him with 4000 men, he stipulating not to make peace with Spain without duly apprising the queen. Henry found the treaty *maigre*, and hesitated for a while to ratify it, but did so evidently in the fear lest Elizabeth should recall her troops from Flanders. The French were still engaged in the siege of La Fère, and menaced by the Cardinal of Austria's army. It was, therefore, necessary to keep on good terms with England; and Henry, indeed, drew a third loan from Elizabeth, through Essex's intervention, of 25,000 crowns, to pay the garrisons of Boulogne and Montreuil.‡

Nothing more strongly marks the complete paralysis of all government in France than to find an energetic chief and active soldier like Henry the Fourth, even after he was fully recognised in every town and province, as incapable of mustering an efficient army, and finding resources to pay it, as his imbecile predecessor. The truth is, Henry had been too pliant and *débonnaire*. He had capitulated to his Catholic noblesse; overpaid them for submission, in the hope of obtaining from their grateful and loyal devotion the means of defeating the Spaniards. Henry believed in none save his nobles. He deemed them the only soldiers, the sole force, almost the sole wealth of the state, and he borrowed the language of his predecessor Francis to declare that his exclusive trust was in the *foi de gentilhomme*. But the gentility of his day was effete, and had lost all the high qualities of its cast, save courage. It no longer felt sincere enthusiasm of any kind. Loyalty to the monarch, or devotion to its creed, had become

* French. king to Fontaine. S. P. ibid.

† Unton.

‡ De Bouillon's letter.

mere hypocrisy and selfishness. Greed had succeeded to glory, and rapine to renown. Henry had bought with money most of the chiefs that surrounded him, and they were so gorged as to be merely anxious for repose. When summoned to war, they joined the royal camp for a few days, and if there was no prospect of a battle and spoil withdrew. The king durst not put a pike into the hands of a French peasant, who was too much degraded by tyranny of every kind, to feel himself a man. As little faith could be placed in the town population, which had been so long suborned and fanaticised by the League and the priesthood. The foreigners whom Henry besought for aid, English, Flemings, or Germans, were reluctant to join in such a service; and the Earl of Essex was perfectly right in sailing to strike at the Spaniards in their own port of Cadiz, where he achieved immortal honour, instead of spending a summer in the reduction of some petty towns in Picardy.

The feebleness of Henry's military efforts was in the meantime most dangerous to his authority. It not only inspired his enemies with audacity, but induced the chief of his noblesse once more to conceive hopes of realising what they had dreamed under the League, the idea of rendering themselves independent in their provinces. Seeing Henry in the midst of these distresses, they employed the Duc de Montpensier to make the formal proposal to him, that if he would allow them to be lords in their governments, performing merely *hommage liege*, they would soon raise for the king all the force he could require, which they well knew how to uphold and to pay. Henry repelled the offer with indignation, and felt it to be what it was, an endeavour to put back the monarchy several centuries — to a period when not only Burgundy and Britanny and Normandy were independent, but when even a baron of the Isle of France might defy the monarch in his capital.*

* Sully.

CHAP. XXVII.

The demand seems to have awakened Henry to a sense of the hopelessness of his condition, as long as he continued to trust to his nobles or his courtiers. He therefore resolved to assemble his States General and entrust the management of his finances to a severe, independent and honest minister, such as he discerned in Rosny. In order to try his fitness comparatively with that of other officers, he included his name in a list of five, whom he despatched to different provinces with the mission of collecting arrears, and discovering deficiencies so as to make up a sum for immediate wants. Rosny insisted on having the power of suspending or changing the officers of the revenue as he might think proper. Setting forth with such powers, and employing them with the rudeness of his character to suspend those who thwarted him, Rosny gleaned so well, he relates, that, 'out of assignations upon old debts, repayments of loans, arrears of wages, pensions to nobodies, and sums made payable to supposititious personages, he brought back 500,000 crowns, a portion of them in coin so small as to require seventy carts to transport them.'

Although the immediate wants of the Swiss regiments were supplied by this expedient, more permanent regulations were necessary to meet the demands of the monarch; the state owing near 800 millions of livres, whilst the twenty-three millions of its annual revenue had charges upon it to the amount of sixteen.* Henry, therefore summoned the chiefs of his noblesse, of his functionaries, and his clergy to meet at Rouen. The plague raging in Paris was a sufficient pretext for not convoking them in that city; and as Normandy paid infinitely more than any other province, an assembly for the restoration of the finances could be held in no more appropriate spot than in its capital.†

The formation of the assembly evinced Henry's ideas

* Forbonnois. † Etats Généraux, tom. 16.

of representative government. There were but eight prelates to represent the clergy, a score of nobles and princes, twice that number of functionaries and judges of parliament, and twelve municipal officers. The clergy were nullified, and even Sully was shocked to find the gentry and the wearers of swords so completely outnumbered by lawyers and *gens de plume*. The king opened the assembly in the church of St. Ouen on the 4th of November, 1596, in a short speech, in which he claimed as his chief glory "to be the liberator and restorer of the state. He found it in ruin, and had saved it by the prayers and councils of his civil servitors, the swords of his noblesse (among which he included the princes, *foi de gentilhomme* being their and his proudest title). He had summoned them not to give but to ask counsel. Grey-bearded and veteran as he was he still put himself in tutelage within their hands." When afterwards reproached by his mistress for the humility of such an expression, Henry observed, that though he said tutelage he meant it to be that which a king, with a sword by his side, might accept.

The assembly separated in their committees, in order, no doubt, to simulate the three estates, though there were members of clergy and noblesse in all. They drew up a petition or *cahier* of demands. In ecclesiastical matters the lay assembly was highly Gallican. It recommended the election of prelates, the assembling of provincial councils every three years, the abolition of simony, and the full liberty of chapters to appeal to the parliament against Papal bulls.

The claims of birth were zealously insisted on by the assembly, with the exclusive right of nobles to places of seneschals and military command; the maintenance of their rights, though domiciled in towns, and the prohibition of those who had bought fiefs to adopt the title. As to the principal object of the assembly,

CHAP. XXVII.

the restoring order to the finances, the project that pleased most was to establish a council called a *Council of Reason*, which was to assume the management of one-half the revenue, five millions of crowns, those spent in the payment of officers, functionaries, and debts; the other half was to be left to the king for his personal expenses and the defence of the state. Henry on first hearing of such a proposal was of the same opinion as the great ministers of his council, to reject it altogether. But Sully remaining silent, the king deferred his answer in order to consult the new finance minister. Sully could not but perceive that the notables were much influenced by his statements and disclosures, and that they purposed following up his plan of cancelling offices, sifting expenses, and controlling abuses. This was so good a purpose, though so vain for a number of men to attempt, that Sully advised the king to accept the offer, leaving the council of reason to grapple with the difficult and arduous task of financial reform; having at their disposal that half of the revenue which was difficult of collection and doubtful of amount, whilst the monarch and his minister took what was clear and led to no dispute. At the same time the revenue not being equal to the demands upon it, the notables voted an additional sum or fund to be levied on all rates throughout the kingdom, which they calculated would produce five millions.

It was the intention of the king after these financial arrangements had borne their fruit, to lay siege to Arras, and Sully had collected and sent to Amiens a number of cannon and a quantity of ammunition for the purpose. The Spaniards in their previous campaigns had limited their efforts to the siege and capture of Hultz. They were not idle, however. They had discovered that Amiens was carelessly guarded, especially by day. The townspeople distinctly refused to receive a garrison, or even a few Swiss in their

suburbs, as Henry begged of them, insisting on those privileges which had been conferred at the time of their return to allegiance. The Spaniards in the last days of February despatched an armed force by stealth to lay hidden in the environs of the town. On the morning of the 11th of March, the people being for the most part at matins, as it was Lent, a waggon entered by the gate, and a quantity of fruit, nuts and apples, escaping from a sack, the guard of the gate went to scramble for them. When the waggon had gone under the portcullis it stopped, the conductors of it firing at the guard. They dropped the portcullis, but it hung, upheld by the waggon. The Spanish troops immediately rushed from the neighbouring ambuscade, and were soon masters both of the gate* and town, the Count of Soissons, the governor, making his escape. The captors were but 3000 in number, but they were soon reinforced, and the town supplied by the Spaniards with everything that could conduce to a formidable defence.

The capture of Amiens at any previous period would have endangered the king's authority. Even now, when all the chiefs of the League had submitted, except the Duc de Mercœur, the knowledge that Spain was master of so important a city, within so short a distance of the capital, made people suspend their growing belief of the complete restoration of monarchic ascendency. The king himself though roused rather than prostrated by the event, ("he had had such experience of good and evil fortune, that he yielded no more to this than to former blows,") † instantly left the court for the seat of war, exclaiming he had long enough played the king of France, and must now recommence the part of king of Navarre. His first care was to secure the other towns of Picardy, and place strong garrisons in Corbie and

* Henry's letter to the Lyonnais. † His letter.

CHAP. XXVII.

Picquigny, places on the Somme above and below Amiens which blocked it by the river. Biron with 3000 infantry, chiefly Swiss, took post at Longpré to intercept any aid from Flanders. He was soon joined by 4000 English, under Baskerville and Savage, who, according to De Thou, greatly distinguished themselves in repelling the sorties of the Spaniards, till they put an end to them altogether. The siege of Amiens lasted six months, and was less remarkable for its military exploits than for the regularity and order which the king, aided by Sully and Villeroy, was able to introduce into the payment, the provisioning, the artillery, and the hospitals of the army. In the procuring of money the king and his ministers certainly leant hard upon the towns, and upon his own functionaries, raising forced loans, selling, and creating in order to sell, new and needless offices of judicature, and above all sequestrating the money which the clergy furnished for the payment of the public debts. In previous years the king had seized the tenths in Picardy and Normandy. These acts recalled the worst days of Henry the Third, and resembled them except that he committed these extortions to gratify his pleasures, Rosny and Henry to drive the Spaniards from Amiens; still they excited serious disaffection amongst the citizens and middle class. The parliaments were loud and extreme in their resistance, and expostulated against Sully's tyranny. And with an audacity not surpassed in the time of the League, they asked Henry to be allowed to appoint a council consisting of magistrates, nobles, and burgesses to give him better advice than he seemed to follow.* The Huguenots in their assemblies behaved much as the Catholic parliament, and sent statements of their own grievances instead of military aid to the king.

* Remonstrance of Paris Parliament. MSS. Colbert, 32. One good and liberal piece of advice they on this occasion gave the king. It was to repeople Amiens by allowing artisans to settle there without being subjected to the old corporation impediments.

CHAP. XXVII.

His foreign allies were not more zealous in his behalf. The king had counted much upon the Protestant princes of Germany, but all, even the Landgravine of Hesse, refused succour* (March 1597). Elizabeth had done what she could, but her aims and energies were directed either to Ireland or to far and naval enterprises under Essex and Raleigh.†

The military incapacity of the Spanish archduke served Henry more than his allies. The French king had made his approaches to the counterscarp of the town, when the enemy appeared to the number of 20,000. At the head of such an army the Prince of Parma would have infallibly raised the siege, but the archduke could do little more than reconnoitre the position of the king in his fortified camp behind the village of Longpré. Strange to say, Biron seemed to wish to let the Spaniards triumph, whilst Mayenne effectively prevented this by throwing up in the night an entrenchment about Longpré, which the marshal had neglected. The archduke tried to pass the river higher up, but was driven back; and not daring to assail the royal camp or force his way into Amiens, he withdrew on the 15th September. Four days after, Amiens capitulated. (1597.) The previous death of the brave Spanish commander, facilitated the surrender.‡ The king, anxious to follow up his success by a battle or by the siege of Dourlens was overruled in both by his chiefs and by the gentry quitting the army; and Rosny's efforts terminating with the siege, the towns and and garrisons of Picardy were as ill supplied and disorderly as before. Fortunately the troops and garrison of the Spanish

* Rommel.

† One of the chief accusations of M. Prevost-Paradol and others against Elizabeth is, her plotting to get possession of Calais. M. Prevost speaks of her fitting out an expedition against it. And yet repeatedly during 1597, about the same time, Henry made offers of Calais to Elizabeth, first by Fouquerolles, then by Reaux, whom he sent expressly, to beg her to besiege and take it, and keep it as security for his debt to her. This offer she flatly refused! S. P. France, 118, p. 304, &c. Queen's answer to Reaux, ib. p. 313.

‡ Henry's letters, Sully.

CHAP. XXVII.

archduke were no better paid and disciplined.* And the universal feeling prevailed that the war must die a natural death from the inability of both sides to continue it.

The Pope (Clement the Eighth) had been for a long time anxious to put an end to a war which exhausted and disorganised the ecclesiastical as well as civil revenues of the two great monarchies. He took occasion as early as the spring of 1596† to represent to Henry that the Turks were seriously menacing Christian Europe, and that more glory and perhaps profit was to be obtained by a monarch of France in repelling them, than in crushing the most Catholic sovereign. Henry was not blind to the brightness of such prospects, which might bring even the Imperial crown of Germany within his reach.‡ But what he principally sighed after was peace—indispensable to the restoration of order in his government and finances, and allowing him leisure to obtain a divorce from Margaret de Valois, and from a second marriage, if Providence permitted, an heir to his throne.

The cardinal, now Archduke Albert, to whom Philip the Second had committed the Low Countries, was, for similar reasons, equally desirous of peace. He, too, had felt his inability to contend at once with France and with England and Holland. Philip had offered him the Low Countries under Spanish suzerainty, with the infanta for a bride; and he was anxious to grasp so bright a guerdon whilst Philip yet reigned, and was able not only to grant, but to support such an arrangement; his failing health foreboded no long duration of his reign. The papal legate finding the two princes so willing, had no difficulty in engaging them to send plenipotentiaries to

* The Archduke's bills on Lisbon were protested, and Philip could not pay them. During the negotiations for peace in 1598, it was impossible to prevent the soldiers of both sides from quitting the fortresses to gather plunder, and get wherewithal to live. Letters of De Chaunes, MSS. Bethune, 9659. Lilley, ditto, 9057.

† Letters of Henry, Feb. 5, 1596.

‡ Ibid.

Vervins. Henry at the same time warned the States of Holland and Queen Elizabeth of his intentions, and urged them to send envoys, if not to join in the peace, to discuss and fix the new relations which must grow out of it.

The mere rumour that Spain consented to treat, at once brought sensible advantages to Henry. It not only rendered the Huguenots with whom he was at variance more pliable, and alarmed the Duc de Mercœur into making proposals for the submission of Britanny; but it prompted the Breton towns to anticipate the Duke, and declare for Henry. It had previously been one of the great sources of weakness and anxiety to the king, that war raged along the frontier of Britanny and Anjou; the Duke of Mercœur being supported by the Spaniards, who garrisoned Blavet, whilst the English queen had withdrawn her troops from the province. In vain had he made the largest concessions to Mercœur if he would submit—the government of the province, the payment of large sums, and additional advantages. The Breton chief held out as the great stickler for Catholicism, and as having succeeded to Mayenne in the championship of that religion in France. Spain had promised never to treat with Henry without including Mercœur, who hoped nothing less than thus to assume the position of an independent prince. Rendered aware of this by intercepted letters, the king was anxious to reduce Mercœur previous to treating with Spain. The citizens of Dinant, a Breton town of importance, having shaken off the authority of the duke's government and declared their allegiance to Henry in the last days of January, seemed to offer the desired opportunity. Henry immediately marched an army into Britanny, preparing to follow himself. Alarmed at these preparations, the Duke of Mercœur sent his duchess to make terms for him, which she did most adroitly, by ingratiating herself with Gabrielle d'Estrées, and offering the daughter and heiress of

CHAP. XXVII.

Mercœur, with the great Ponthieu property, as a wife to Gabrielle's son by Henry the Fourth, the future Duc de Vendôme. Other important Breton towns, Ancenis, Fougères, Vannes, and Hennebon, offered to treat (March 3). The Duc de Mercœur was no longer allowed the government of Britanny. But a bridge of gold was made for this last retreating enemy of the League; he not only kept the large Ponthieu property, settled on his daughter, but received 235,000 crowns for his great expenses, and 16,000 crowns pension; 500,000 crowns which he owed Prince Casimir were forgiven him. The 800,000 crowns lent to the king by the states of Britanny on this occasion, could scarcely more than cover the purchase money to Mercœur.*

His presence south of the Loire brought Henry into closer contact with the Huguenots, the circumstances of the times urging them, and enabling him, to come to a solemn accord. They had, in truth, been most scurvily treated; and had they been ambitious or active, or provided with a force proportioned to their means and numbers, they could scarcely have avoided claiming, with arms in their hands, as they had in former years, some regard for their rights and some consideration for their loyal services. The Huguenots had gained nothing by Henry the Third's coming into their ranks for protection and support, except twice declaring the Edict of 1577 in force, and a written promise signed by the Catholic lords, that in treating with the League, no claim should be introduced detrimental to the religionists. Instead of having this confirmed on the accession of the prince for whom they had fought, Henry the Fourth found himself compelled to cancel its principal condition, that which opened office and employment to the Protestants. In 1591, after having gained the battles of Arques and of Ivry, in despite of which the

* Terms of Treaty, in MSS. Bethune, 9068.

Pope fulminated fresh bulls of excommunication against him, Henry permitted the Huguenots to hold an assembly at Nantes, and to present him with a *cahier*, or enumeration of their grievances. To meet the demands made by them, Henry consented to reissue the Edict of 1577, with its subsequent development at Nerac and at Fleix, thereby declaring the Reformers capable of all offices and honours. Moreover the king offered by secret articles, written and deposited with the chancellor, to permit Protestant worship in towns, where by stipulations with the Catholics it was forbidden. At court the same liberty was to be enjoyed in the apartments of the king's sister, and in those of the Duc de Bouillon, Sancy, Rohan, and Duplessis, provided there was no loud psalm-singing. As to the oath taken by the king, as chief of the Order of the St. Esprit, to exterminate Protestants, he was ready to give assurances to the contrary. Other concessions were made with respect to schools and colleges. But the deputies were highly dissatisfied with the secrecy, and the consequent non-validity of these later concessions, and they did not separate without renewing their oath of union. Nor were they unwarranted in doing so, for the Catholics, learning there were secret articles appended to the public edicts, framed their secret articles also. Henry's parliament of Paris, sitting at Tours, registered the Edict of 1577, only with the proviso that the Huguenots were to be admitted to no office. The parliament of Rouen made even a more hostile proviso; whilst other parliaments rejected it *in toto*.*

When such was the spirit and the conduct of these parliaments, which the king upheld against the more bigot judges of the League, it may be imagined, what was the fate of the Protestants throughout the kingdom. The concessions of the Edict of 1577 were no-

* Duplessis-Mornay, Bref Discours.

CHAP. XXVII.

where fulfilled. And any attempt to perform Protestant worship, except in the towns where they themselves dominated, was followed by attacks and by bloodshed. The Huguenots, however, made no public or joint complaint until after the to them disastrous event of the king's conversion. They paused even then, no doubt expecting that the king would feel it necessary to give fresh guarantees to his late co-religionists. Instead of this, tidings came to their surprise and horror, that in the treaties concluded with most of the towns and provinces of the League which submitted, were inserted clauses, excluding Protestants and Protestant worship altogether from those regions. Such stipulations were made with the ultra-Catholics of Paris, Orleans, Lyons, Rouen, Toulouse, Bourges, Le Puy, Poitiers, Perigueux, Agen, Marmande, Vernon, Le Havre, Honfleur, Pontaudemer, Dijon, and Rheims. Many of these towns had been all Protestant, and still contained numbers who in terror conformed to Catholicism. Henry the Fourth sacrificed them all; and the parliament of Aix enforced the same stipulations for the whole of Provence. When the Huguenot assembly of St. Foy, in July 1594, pointed out this monstrous breach of his promise, and of the Edict of 1577, to Henry, he was unable to reply. All he could do was to renew the old trickery of Mantes, and to promise in secret articles to counteract and undo the recent concessions to the Catholics.

Such secrecy, and such excuses resorted to by a monarch, amounted to a confession of his inability to enforce justice in his dominions, however he might award it. And the Protestants, finding the royal power fail them, were obliged to resuscitate their old League and organisation. They formed a general council of one or two deputies for each province, and in each province a council of seven—nobles, pastors, and citizens combined. These were directed to take care that none but Protestant commanders or soldiers were admitted to

garrison their towns; that if these were left unpaid by the government, the local taxes of the *taille* and *taillon* should be appropriated for the purpose, as the king himself had agreed at Mantes.* With this a mode of raising contributions amongst themselves was arranged, and preparations made for defence.

The first assembly of the Reformers, according to these new resolutions and regulations, took place at Saumur, in February 1595, from whence they despatched La Noue and Primaudiere to the king at Lyons. Henry put them off by the promise of sending commissioners, who, when they arrived, offered, as usual, the Edict of 1577, with the addition of secret articles. These were not communicated in writing, but merely read, the deputies being allowed to take notes—at a time, too, when the conventions with Mayenne and the other chiefs of the League were publicly announced and registered in every parliament. Another synod, that of Loudun, in 1596, sent deputies or agents to the king, who returned with answers still more unsatisfactory; so much so, that Duplessis-Mornay warned his master, that if he attempted any longer to deceive his Protestant subjects with words, he would provoke them to revolt. They, however merely expressed their resentment at that time by a *complaint*, containing all their grievances, and which exists as a fearful record of them.

The Huguenots informed Henry, that they were not Spaniards or leaguers, on whom he lavished offices and treasure, but men who had spent their all in raising him from his cradle to the throne. They had succeeded, but, in the moment of success, found that the monarch for whom they had made so many sacrifices, deserted them and their religion, not only to profess belief in the crudest absurdities of Rome, but to swear into the hands of their old persecutors, both at his coronation

* D'Aubigné.

CHAP. XXVII.

and at the installation of the order of the St. Esprit, that he would join them in extirpating the Protestants!

Facts had corresponded to words. In every part of the kingdom, except in the towns where they armed and "could show their teeth," the attempts of Protestants to perform their worship were met by outrage and by massacre. But recently, the Huguenots of La Chataignerie, deprived of their arms, were ruthlessly massacred by the garrison of Rochefort, the scenes of Vassy and St Bartholomew's Eve being thus resuscitated under the reign of Henry of Bearn.

As to the execution of the edict of 1577, it was a mockery. Instead of fit places being appointed for Protestant worship, such spots were fixed as were too far or too dangerous for them to attend. In all Burgundy, Provence, and Picardy, there was not a town left them. And even in such as Caen, Alençon, Dieppe, Sancerre, where the great majority of the inhabitants were Protestants, none dare preach within the walls. The parliaments everywhere mocked the law of toleration. That of Bordeaux had burned the Bible by the hands of the executioner; and magistrates, instead of maintaining the edict, were foremost in forcing the religionists to adoration of relics, or the attendance at mass, or in the carrying off their children to be baptized. Nowhere were they admitted, as the edict directed, to any functions, save a few high nobles whom the king took by the hand. Their gentry and citizens were allowed neither schools nor the right of burial. The mixed tribunals promised them were everywhere refused. In conclusion, the Huguenots demanded a law, which would impart to them the common rights of subjects. They asked not the treasures heaped upon the leaguers, or the monopolies accorded them, but simply justice, toleration, and security.

The force and truth of these complaints had probably less influence than the fact of the Huguenots

abstaining from any zealous aid in the siege of Amiens. They were separating their cause from that of the king, and looking out for a new leader either in the Duc de Bouillon or La Tremouille. And it was alleged that a difference between the clergy and the lay chiefs, as to which of them should have the control of the funds, alone prevented the Huguenots assuming an attitude of rebellion. At the same time the king's chief reason for remaining deaf to their demands was about to be removed. The Duke of Mercœur, supported in Britanny by the Spaniards, pretended to represent the orthodoxy of the League, and the cause of the Catholic noblesse. But when the Breton towns fell off from him, and he himself began seriously to offer submission, Henry considered that he might make public concessions to the Huguenots, without increasing the power or exciting the resentment of their antagonists.

The religionists too were rendered more placable and pliable by learning that Mercœur had submitted, and that Spain had consented to negotiate for peace. They besought the king to come to an agreement with them first, and to issue the promised edicts of toleration before the treaty with Spain was concluded. The negotiations with the deputies were completed by the time that the king entered Nantes in April, after having received the promised submission of Mercœur. In this town Henry signed on the 15th of April, 1598, the edict, known as that of Nantes, which became the rule of Protestant rights and existence in France. It was agreed at the time that the treaty should be kept secret until the Pope's legate had departed. And the king in his letters even to his principal officers passed the matter over in silence. The Protestants on their side demanded that the assembly of Vendome should continue its sittings until the publication and registering of the new law.*

* Histoire de l'Edit de Nantes, De Thou, Mémoires et Corre-

CHAP. XXVII.

The edict of Nantes answers little to the idea that almost every one might conceive of an act of toleration. Instead of bestowing equal rights and liberty of conscience to the Protestants of the realm, it merely granted them full liberty of worship in certain towns, about 200, chiefly of the south, where the reformed religion had preserved its domination. In other districts the Huguenots were to select one town in each bailliage or judicial district, in the suburbs of which they might build and hold a *prêche*. By the secret articles appended to the edict, the number was extended to two towns in certain provinces, except in such places as were mentioned in the treaties with the noblesse of the League. This exception banished Protestantism from almost the entire north of France, the region nearest to the Protestants of England, of Holland, and of Germany. They were to be banished from the country of the Guises. They were to have but two places of worship in all Picardy. A special clause allowed them to worship in the suburb of Dieppe. In Lyons and Toulouse, in Dijon and Chalons, Agen, Perigueux, Sens, as well as Nantes itself, and Besançon, they were expressly forbidden. One place of worship five leagues from Paris was allowed for the Huguenots of the country around the capital. The right of public worship to the Protestants in the suburbs of towns, granted by Henry the Third, was thus limited to less than one half of the kingdom by Henry the Fourth. The private worship in chateaux and residences, sanctioned by the former monarch, was renewed in the edict of Nantes. In return for these concessions the Protestants were obliged to pay tithes, but not rates for the reparation of churches. They were to

spondance de Duplessis-Mornay, Plaintes des Eglises Reformées. Documents to be found in Mémoires de la Ligue, and in Haag, la France Protestante, Floquet, Hist. de Parlement de Normandie, Mém. de Groulart, D'Aubigné, Lettres de Henri IV., Sully, Letters and Documents in S. P.

conform to the laws enjoined by Catholicism respecting marriages, and to observe the fêtes of that church, even to permitting their windows to be furnished with hangings during processions, and allowing Catholic officers to do this. Wherever Protestants had purchased ecclesiastical property without the express ordonnance or permission of the sovereign, the Church might recover the property without paying indemnity or restoring purchase money. The Protestants were henceforth to be eligible to all offices and employments, and schools and hospitals were to be opened to them. An important and difficult question was how justice was to be administered to the Huguenots. This the edict of Nantes sought to secure to them by establishing mixed tribunals in the south, half Protestant half Catholic. As this was impossible at Toulouse, the seat of the parliament, where Huguenots were prohibited, the mixed court was established at Castres. In like manner the mixed court for Provence and for Burgundy was established in Dauphiné. There was also one at Bordeaux. In Paris was formed a Chambre de l'Edit, in which there was to be one Protestant judge, but the choice of Catholic judges was to have the approbation of the Protestants.

Such were the chief provisions of the edict of Nantes, for the guarantee or observance of which Henry permitted the Protestant garrisons to be maintained in 100 of the towns, called towns of surety.* He was to appoint governors, but not such as they would object to. These garrisons amounted to about 4000 men. He promised to allow them 180,000 crowns annually to maintain them. And he at the same time promised 45,000 crowns annually for the payment of their ministers, and for education.† These promises were,

* A full list of the towns and garrisons is the last document in S. P. France, 119.

† It was this clause, and that establishing the Chambre de l'Edit de Paris, which occasioned most

CHAP. XXVII.

however, made in secret articles, and were only to last eight years, though eventually they were maintained till 1611.

Such was the edict of Nantes, which has more the appearance of the capitulations which the Sultan of Turkey was in the habit of granting to his semi-subject provinces, than of peace and accord between two Christian sects. Nothing could be more unsatisfactory and more dangerous than this kind of treaty between a king and his subjects, they being allowed to keep arms in their hands to maintain it. Such a concession evidently contemplated the possibility of the king's being succeeded by a prince more unfavourable to the Protestants, and less likely to uphold toleration. It was not without reason that the Huguenots insisted on such guarantees, seeing, as the Duc de Bouillon expressed it to Sully, "that they and their children would not fail to be regarded as pests, gangrenes, and unwholesome tumours in the state, if God should afflict them with the loss of their king."

It tells but ill for the political wisdom of Henry, and, indeed, of the religionists, that they could arrive at no more satisfactory settlement, one more promising of duration, less productive of mistrust and irritation between the two religions, and better calculated to ensure their living at peace. Even the state of things which prevailed in England, where the Catholics were kept down by penal laws, was, perhaps, preferable to the state of legal independence enjoyed by the French Huguenots: since the condition of the recusants naturally excited the commiseration and awakened the interest of the sovereign in their favour; whilst in France an edict so incompatible with an absolute

difficulty. The *entretien* or payment of ministers by the king, not by their flocks, was demanded at Tours in 1593, Henry for obvious reasons, favouring it, his Catholic councillors such as Villeroy, strongly opposing it. The Huguenots demanded six judges in the Paris parliament. They obtained four in all. Memoirs of Madame Duplessis-Mornay.

monarchy could not but tempt a Richelieu or a Louis the Fourteenth to abolish it!

Negotiations for peace with Spain were still proceeding at Vervins. The French plenipotentiaries reached that town on the 7th of February, and were met by those of Spain, accompanied by the Cardinal of Florence and the General of the Franciscans, on the part of the Pope. Had there been but the differences between the two chief belligerents to settle, the task would have been an easy one. For the French came instructed to demand merely the restoration of what the Spaniards still held in Picardy and Britanny.* And these the Spaniards were quite prepared to cede. But there were the interests of the allies on either side to safeguard. The Spaniards asked that passports might be furnished for the envoys of the Duke of Mercœur, and of Savoy, in order to their joining the Congress. These the French king granted for Savoy, but refused to Mercœur, who was not only a subject, but had offered and was negotiating for submission. Henry, who had so lately induced England and Holland to enter into an offensive league with him against Spain, could not treat without at least the appearance of consulting them.† They hesitated and delayed to send envoys, scarcely believing him serious, the question of peace and war being fiercely disputed in English councils. He sent De Maisse to England to warn Elizabeth, and cover his defection, but he failed to persuade either her or Cecil that his "chanting of peace," as the latter called it, was more than a lure to obtain more

* Instructions to Sillery and Bellievre. Mém. de Duplessis-Mornay.

† The most frank statement of his reasons for concluding the Peace of Vervins was made by Henry to the German Protestant princes, to whom he sent an envoy in 1598, for the very purpose of conveying these explanations. He had been sincere, he said, in joining the Protestant League with England, Holland, and the German princes, but the latter especially had refused him aid. Yet he was still resolved to prosecute the war, until the affair of Amiens undeceived him. He then perceived that, however foreign succour might enable him to prolong the war, it could not enable him to terminate it. Rommel. Cor. Ined. de Henry IV., p. 27.

CHAP. XXVII.

men and money from the queen.* As to the Dutch, they would not hear of peace, no terms consistent with their independence being likely to be offered. The liberal and spirited politicians in England hesitated to break with such allies for the sake of the hollow friendship of Spain and France, the conservatives in Elizabeth's council taking the opportunity to denounce the democratic Dutch as selfish monopolisers of trade, and foes of aristocracy as well as monarchy. Yet Lord Burleigh, then sinking into the grave with age, was strenuous for peace, and his nephew, Secretary Sir Robert Cecil, was sent to France. Remembering the tricks of the Earl of Essex in former negotiations, he refused to confer with anyone, save the king, with whom his first care was to remonstrate against the peace. But Henry pleaded his utter inability to continue the war, adding that if England and Holland wanted to do so, he could aid them by repaying the sums which he had borrowed much more efficiently than in the field. Sir Robert Cecil, in obedience to his uncle's policy, would have closed with Henry's offer; but Barnevelt, the Dutch envoy, was so resolute in accepting no terms, that Cecil could not abandon him.† And he soon learnt that Henry had already concluded his chief conditions of peace with the Spaniard, without waiting for the coming or consultation of his allies. He took his departure therefore in discontent.‡ Henry insisted on a six months' truce being accorded to England, the Archduke Albert with much reluctance granting two. With Savoy the French king hoped to put an end to all dissensions, by refer-

* Burleigh's letter in Wright's Eliz. De Maisse's long despatch of January 4, 1598, in S. P. France, 119. Prevost-Paradol.

† Letter of Sir R. Cecil, giving an account of his interviews with the king and the ministers at Angers. S. P. France, 120. His letter despatched from Nantes is in Birch. Henry is said to have encouraged the Dutch at this time to continue the war. See Neville's letter to Cecil, Winwood's Memorials, vol. i. p. 107.

‡ Lettres de Henri IV., t. iv. p. 971.

ring the contested question of the Marquisate of Saluces to the arbitrage of the Pope. The duke objected to this, and refused to abandon his claim; and the Spaniards, pressed by the French king to compel their ally of Savoy to submit, declined the invidious task.

By the treaty of Vervins, signed on May 22, 1598, France recovered Calais and all the towns of the Low Countries, which it possessed in 1559. The frontier fixed by the treaty of Cateau Cambresis was restored. Cambray was to be given up to its bishop, but the Spaniards refused to evacuate the citadel. Blavet in Britanny was also to be surrendered. During the negotiations, the Archduke Albert had prayed, as a special compliment to himself, the restoration of the county of Charolais with Franche Comté, and with this Henry complied. Thus came to a pause the struggle between the houses of Austria and Bourbon, which, with few intermissions, had occupied the sixteenth century. Personally and territorially the result was null. The frontier, which bounded France at the commencement, continued to mark it at the close. Neither empire had achieved superiority in this respect, and the expenditure during an hundred years of two of the chief nations and dynasties of Europe in efforts, in treasure, and in life, seemed to have been made in vain. If, however, apart from acquisition of territory, it be enquired, which of the contending kingdoms made its principles prevail, and which succeeded in giving the tone to the other's politics and religion, then no doubt Spain must be admitted to have been triumphant.

Philip the Second succumbed a few months after the peace of Vervins, to a complication of physical suffering and loathsome disease; but his last moments were radiant with satisfaction and rendered glorious by success. His treasure might be exhausted, his armies powerless, and his name abhorred as that of one who had suborned more murders, inflicted more tortures,

CHAP. XXVII.

and spread more misery over the breadth of two continents, than had ever before been in the power of man to do. Yet this apt personification of the genius of evil left the world exultant that he had not only preserved and defended the possessions of his wide inheritance, scattered as it was over the face of Europe and of the world, but stamped his creed and established his régime, not alone throughout these, but even upon his great antagonist, France. The most extreme sect of Protestantism had taken birth in France, and at one time had overrun the country and mastered the court. That it would have prevailed and kept its hold over the land, had not Spain flung its powerful support into the balance with the House of Guise, cannot be asserted certainly; but had Philip not interfered, the struggle would have been more equal, and France continued to maintain that neutral ground in politics and regimen, between the north and south, which seemed natural to its character and geographical position.

Instead of this, the arms and presence of Spain forced upon Henry the Fourth the necessity of adopting its religion as well as its principles of government. Henry may have accepted more apparent obstructions to his authority than the Spanish monarch. He allowed towns and parliaments and the holders of fiefs to keep many rights, and refused to promulgate the ultra-Catholic intolerance of the Council of Trent; but he not the less assimilated his government of France to that of Spain, separating it from the north and its sympathies, and making it a member of the absolutist and intolerant League of the South.

This was, no doubt, far from Henry's intention, and from that of Sully. Whilst adopting Catholicism, his design was to resume his hostility to the House of Austria, and to continue his aid to the liberties and independence of the Protestant north. So fixed was he in this view, that he censured the plenipotentiaries

at Vervins for making it necessary for him to swear to abandon all *pratiques et intelligences* against Spain.* He owned he preferred loose bonds. He afterwards shook them off, and prepared to lead if not a Protestant crusade, at least a common force of Protestants, against Catholic Austria. Fate ordered it otherwise. After his death, Richelieu found it necessary to revive the king's policy in humbling the House of Austria, and rescuing from its grasp the Protestant princes of North Germany. This, however, was an exception to the political line which the French monarchy pursued in the main—a line which was a complete continuance of that of Philip the Second, in propagating absolutism and Catholicism by tyranny and by the sword. It was no longer, indeed, Spain that took the lead in the defence and manifestation of these principles. France came forward as their representative, and thrust Spain into the second rank. But it was still the Spanish and the southern ideas that inspired French rulers, and history bears marks all through the seventeenth century of how completely France was Hispanified in its first opening years. Richelieu was a Ximenes, and Louis the Fourteenth but a magnificent and somewhat civilised Philip the Second.

During the ten or twelve years which Henry reigned after the pacification of Vervins and of Nantes, history has little to record, beyond the successive failures of attempts to break the treaty and renew the struggle. First came the zealots and the parliaments which resisted and refused to register the Edict of Nantes. That of Paris objected to the number of Protestant judges in the mixed court, and ended by admitting only one. The objection to the admission of the religionists to all office was only overcome by the promise of the king to be very chary of such appointments. He insisted

* Mémoires et Correspondance de Duplessis-Mornay, tom. viii.

CHAP. XXVII.

on the Edict being registered, and dealt sharp reprimands to those who persisted in refusing.

"I remember," said he to the judges, "six and twenty years ago, playing at dice in Charles the Ninth's court after the Saint Bartholomew—the Duke of Guise, as well as La Chatre, who is now here, were present—drops of blood came forth upon the table. When wiped off they came again, when I refused to play." After this exordium, which warned those present not to renew the civil war and its crimes, but to bury both in oblivion, Henry told them "he was determined to have peace at home as well as abroad, and with this view he would be master. They might resuscitate the League and go in procession with the Jacobins, the insurgent beneath their cloaks, but he would be more Catholic than they, and get the Pope to declare them heretics. And as to their barricades, he would leap over them, and knew right well how to enforce obedience." The parliament of Paris consented to register, but the provincial parliaments acceded with so many protests and exceptions that the Huguenot synods could not bring themselves to accept the "mutilated Edict."

The Duke of Savoy next strove to evade submission. The husband of the eldest daughter of Philip the Second, he was mortified at beholding the Low Countries and Franche Comté assigned to the younger sister as the result of the war, whilst he himself had gained nothing. Indignant he turned to France, and proposed winning Henry the Fourth's favour by offering to join him in a renewal of the war for a conquest of North Italy for himself and the imperial crown for Henry. He came to Paris full of these schemes, to which neither Henry nor his minister Sully lent a willing ear. They mistrusted the duke, so long and perseveringly the enemy of Henry and of France. They insisted on his surrendering Saluces.* In revenge, the duke made

* Sully, De Thou, &c.

CHAP. XXVII.

use of the remainder of his stay to fill the minds of some malcontent French nobles with restless designs and ambitious hopes, and then pretending a want of time to decide whether he should surrender Saluces or La Bresse, took his departure for his dominions (Feb. 1600). Subsequently he refused to give up either; and Henry, who was prepared for this, sent an army, under Biron, with Sully in command of the artillery, which he had augmented and rendered perfect, to the reduction of the Duke of Savoy. Biron was one of those whom the duke had insidiously won by holding forth the same prospects which had cheated the Constable Bourbon—the crown of Burgundy under the patronage of Spain. Biron in consequence would gladly have shown tardiness in the reduction of Bourg. But his officers were too zealous to be held back, and Bourg, though not its castle, was taken. Sully then laid siege to Montmeillan, the stronghold of Savoy, where its valleys join those of Dauphiné. The place was considered impregnable, and Sully was jeered for the assurance that he would take it. He knew, however, the additional power which he had given to his artillery, which soon made such a breach that Montmeillan capitulated. The French army then took and razed the Fort St. Catherine, which the Savoy Prince had erected in the vicinity of Geneva, in order to reduce that city. It was a day of rejoicing to the inhabitants, and Theodore of Beza at their head, when they came forth to witness the blowing up and ruin of the bastions of the hostile fort.* A papal legate soon appeared to express resentment at the destruction of the fort, and to intervene for the Duke of Savoy. The French king insisted on the same alternative of the duke's giving up either Saluces or La Bresse, that province which

* The Genevese forgave the king 100,000 ducats of the debt due to them, on condition of his razing Fort St. Catharine. Winwood's Mem. vol. i. p. 277.

CHAP. XXVII.

extends between Lyons and Geneva. Such an acquisition was of the utmost importance to France. It cut off the connection between the Spanish possessions in Italy and those in Franche Comté, and at the same time pushed the French frontier close to Geneva. The Duke of Savoy long hesitated, and Henry threatened to lead his army across the Alps. It was not merely the Duke, but the Pope and the Italian allies, who were terrified at the threat, and to obviate its execution the Duke of Savoy ceded La Bresse and Bugey, the present department de l'Ain, whilst Henry waived the French claim to the Marquisate of Saluces, as well as to Pignerol and the valley of Perosa, thus wisely strengthening himself in France, and abandoning idle claims to Italian provinces. (Jan. 1601.)

Whilst the king was engaged in this expedition against the Duke of Savoy, another important event in his life also took place, his marriage with Marie de Medicis, which was celebrated at Lyons in December, 1600. His wisest councillors had never ceased to urge him to a divorce with Margaret of Valois, and a second marriage. Many reasons rendered this urgent. Considerable doubts hung over the birth of the presumptive heir to the crown, the young Prince of Condé, whose mother was believed to have terminated the days of the late prince, her husband, by poison. Henry had now for many years lived with Gabrielle d'Estrées, who had borne him two sons, Cæsar and Alexandre. It was her great desire to legitimate these children by a marriage with the king; and Henry was not averse to the act. She had gained many of the king's influential counsellors to support her view. But the king himself had misgivings, and Sully supported them, lest the princes of the blood might contest the right of these children, and thus make the king's death the signal for a renewed civil war. Such antagonism brought Sully into fierce altercation with Gabrielle. On one occasion when he

refused to sanction the great expense of baptizing one of her sons with the ceremony usual with the royal offspring, she broke forth, and was not to be appeased even by the king's intervention. It was then that Henry is said to have exclaimed, that he would rather part with ten mistresses, even such as Gabrielle, than lose a friend like Sully.

The difficulties arising out of the mutual efforts of Henry and Gabrielle, in the way of the king's second marriage, were removed in a tragical way. In 1599 Henry, deeming it decorous that he should pass the Easter and perform its religious ceremonies alone at Fontainebleau, Gabrielle removed to Paris under the care of M. De la Varenne. The king accompanied her as far as Melun, and they parted with more than ordinary signs of affection, with sad presentiments on her part of never meeting him again. The prognostication was realised, for on the 8th of April she was taken with fits, being then advanced in pregnancy, which threatened to suffocate her. Recovering somewhat, she attempted to write to Henry, but was stricken again with what apparently was paralysis. Word was sent to the king, who hastened on horseback, but was met a couple of leagues out of Paris by Bassompierre with tidings that Gabrielle was no more. Henry was deeply affected, and even indisposed for a time, but he soon rallied and took consolation in new attachments.*

The negotiations with the Grand Duke of Florence for the hand of his niece were accelerated by this event, Margaret of Valois consenting to a divorce, and the court of Rome favouring the match. But ere Henry could behold his new bride, he became en-

* L'Etoile relates, that Gabrielle was taken ill after banqueting at Zamet's house. Bassompierre, who accompanied her, does not mention her having been there at all. He states, that after her fit, her features became irrecognisable.

CHAP. XXVII.

amoured of the charms of Henriette d'Entragues. She was the daughter of the Count d'Entragues and Marie Touchet, who, previous to her marriage with the count, had borne to Charles the Ninth a son, known as the Count d'Auvergne. A hundred thousand crowns and a written promise of marriage was the price which Henriette demanded. Sully, on being consulted, gave the money, but tore the promise, which, however, the king patiently re-wrote, and handed to the lady. The monarch unfortunately laid little stress upon promise or oath, written or unwritten. Accustomed to make light of them in politics, he deemed those wrung from his gallantry of little worth. The promise to Mademoiselle Henriette was to marry her if she should give birth to a son within a certain period. This she failed to do; a terrific storm having caused her to give birth to a dead-born child, and this relieved the king from a promise, shamefully made upon the eve of his marriage with Marie de Medicis, which took place at Lyons as we have mentioned. But Henry's connection with Henriette d'Entragues did not cease. He created her Marquise de Verneuil, brought her to his home to inhabit the same palace as his queen, to whose plaints and resentment he showed small consideration. Marie de Medicis was, indeed, neither of a person nor of a character calculated to command so volatile a prince and so confirmed a voluptuary. Her figure as represented by Rubens, and as described by Henry himself, was "terribly robust," nor did she seem to know how to win his affection or command his respect. Sully did his utmost to appease the quarrels of the royal spouses, and often partially succeeded. Yet he might not have been able to prevent Henry from sending Marie back to Florence, had she not given birth in September 1601, to the Dauphin, the future Louis the Thirteenth.

The birth of an heir to the throne, the blandness of

CHAP. XXVII.

the Pope, and the obsequiousness shown to France by both Catholic and Protestant potentates—these advantages, strengthened by the regularity introduced into the finances and government by Sully and by the king himself, had not the effect which might have been expected in quieting the restless spirits of the noblesse. Accustomed to a century of anarchy and license, they could not at once reconcile themselves to the authority, the order, and above all, the strict economy of Henry's government. None chafed more under the curb thus applied to unquiet and ambitious chiefs, than the Maréchal Biron, son of the veteran, who had so long led the armies of Henry, he himself the successful leader of so many fights. He formed, like his father, an overweening estimate of his own services, which, though he was duke, marshal, and governor of Burgundy, he thought not sufficiently recompensed. Sent to Brussels to witness the ceremony of the archduke swearing to the treaty of Vervins, Biron had been swayed from his allegiance by the flattery and insinuations of that court. He had subsequently come in contact with the Duke of Savoy, and that arch-tempter had held out to him the prospect of a marriage with his third daughter, and the support of Spain towards his retaining Burgundy in his own right, provided he joined a league of Spain and Savoy against France. Biron's consequent lukewarmness in conducting the war against the Duke of Savoy in La Bresse has been mentioned. It had produced remarks and remonstrances from the king; and Biron seeing how easily the Duke of Savoy had been reduced and destroyed, and fearing betrayal in that quarter, made a clean breast of it to Henry and asked pardon. He had obtained it nominally, but soon perceived that he could never again aspire to the full confidence of the king. A short time after, the same causes of discontent which affected him also manifested themselves in the noblesse south of the Loire.

CHAP. XXVII.

The Catholic and Protestant gentry of this region had both served the king in his struggle with the League, and obtained but scant reward. The war being over, the gentry were left without pay or military employ, whilst the towns found themselves more burdened than they were even in time of war, by the additional *sou pour livre* imposed upon all sales, by the meeting of notables at Rouen. In the summer of 1601 the town of Poitiers had first rebelled against this tax*, and refused to submit to it, and was brought to obedience by gentle means instead of violence. The king himself was subsequently obliged to visit this region, and after nominally insisting upon the people acquiescing in the tax, found it more expedient to be generous and to abandon it altogether.

Biron's aim in associating the Duke of Bouillon in his plot was not only to unite Huguenot and Catholic malcontents against Henry, but also to make use of De Bouillon's influence at the court of England and of Protestant Germany. When Biron was despatched from Calais to England by Henry, he was accompanied in secret by the Count d'Auvergne, his associate in conspiracy, and no doubt they hoped to find encouragement in England for their disaffection. In this they were altogether disappointed, Elizabeth taking the opportunity to read Biron a lecture on the shame of disloyalty and the perilous consequences of treason.

Little profiting by this lesson, Biron continued his intrigues with Spain and Savoy. His chief confidant, De Luz, had the imprudence first to employ and then offend a person named La Fin, who had been entrusted with a confidential mission on his part to Milan and Turin. It was indeed the Count de Fuentes who conceived suspicion of him and recommended his being made away with. La Fin discerned his danger, saw

* Memoirs of Groulart, 1601.

that he was suspected, and looked to turn his former knowledge to profit by disclosing it to the court. Henry caused him to be brought to Fontainebleau, where he not only gave proofs by word of mouth of Biron's intelligence with the enemies of the country, but produced letters and documents in support of his revelations.*

Biron was then enticed from his government of Burgundy and from the towns which he held there, and came at length in the course of 1602, believing that nothing perilous was known, and that by showing a bold face he would confound his enemies. La Fin contributed to lull him in this fatal security by his assurance that nothing important had been discovered. Receiving the traitor blandly, the king showed him familiarly the buildings and improvements of his palace, and took the opportunity of pressing him to own frankly aught hostile to his crown that Biron might have been engaged in. The marshal shrank from repeating the same confession and asking the same pardon, as those which he had made and obtained at Lyons. He declared he had nothing to confess, and merely desired to be confronted with his enemies. Henry allowed a day to pass, again had conversation with Biron, and again counselled him to be frank. The king consulted his council, which recommended the arrest and punishment of so dangerous a chief. Still he employed Sully and the Count of Soissons to bend the marshal to submission. But the latter was so confident and defiant, that in a conversation respecting the hopes of the King of Spain, he observed, that Philip entertained no fear of the French monarch. Henry himself made a last attempt to induce his proud noble to confess, without, however, warning him that

* La Fin was not the only person from whom Henry learned Biron's machinations. De Beaumont, his envoy in London, sent a full account of them in a letter to Villeroy, dated May 2, 1602. Beaumont's Despatches.

CHAP. XXVII.

he was in possession of the proofs of his guilt, and finding him obstinate, departed with the words, "Adieu, Baron de Biron;" thus depriving him in word of the titles and honours he had gained. In a few minutes after he was arrested with the Count d'Auvergne and conducted by Sully to the Bastille. The parliament instantly proceeded with his trial, and the evidence was such that, without hesitation, they condemned Biron to death.

To order the execution of a capital sentence upon one, who had so long fought by his side, and rendered him important service, was not in the nature of Henry or indeed in the habits of the age. But the king felt it requisite for the pacification of his kingdom and the reduction of his high noblesse to sentiments of loyalty and allegiance. And he moreover feared to allow so dangerous a personage to survive him, and be at liberty to recommence his intrigues during his successor's minority. Queen Elizabeth recommended severity. Her stern policy had contributed so manifestly to the stability of her throne, that her advice had weight. The friends of the marshal, especially Caumont, Duke de la Force, his brother-in-law, besought Henry to show mercy, and Biron himself in a touching appeal pleaded his thirty-two wounds, and prayed to be allowed to go in exile to Hungary. He was too dangerous to be let loose. Still, the unhappy man could not believe to the last in the reality of his fate. He quarrelled with the executioner, uttered wild threats of resistance to the guards and witnesses of the scene, accused the king of cowardice, and thus spending his last moments in imprecations, delayed the final stroke a whole day, and at last in an access of rage and incertitude rather than resignation, his head was severed from his body.* Biron had mocked the

* Procés verbal de la mort de Biron. Mem. of Duplessis-Mornay. Vie et Mort du Maréchal Biron. Henry's letter, tom. ix. Sully, De Thou, Cayet, La Force.

behaviour of Essex on the scaffold as that of a clergyman rather than a soldier. His own conduct on the same melancholy occasion was that of neither.* CHAP. XXVII.

The sinister designs of Biron did not altogether perish with him. The Comte d'Auvergne, implicated and arrested with him, being of blood royal, was pardoned, but soon found another discontented spirit to incite him to fresh machinations. This was his half-sister, the Marquise de Verneuil. Disappointed in her hopes by the king's marriage, she too had opened communications with Spanish agents, and had been led to believe by these agents of that ever-meddling court, that her son by Henry would be acknowledged his successor, by virtue of the written promise that the king had made her. It is scarcely credible that, entertaining so rash and criminal an idea, the marquise should have plotted no less than the assassination of the monarch. They were arrested, tried, and condemned to death for the conspiracy (February, 1605). But Henry himself could not have had much faith in the testimony, when he pardoned the marquise after some months' imprisonment, and even renewed his old relations with her.

But the grandee, whose independence and disaffection gave Henry most trouble and anxiety, was Turenne, Duc de Bouillon. As a leading Huguenot, he had good grounds for discontent, openly declaring that, notwithstanding the edict of Nantes, the religionists had no satisfactory assurances for the future. In this opinion he was joined not merely by the French Huguenots, but by foreign statesmen, by Cecil in England, and by Protestant princes in Germany. These were powers and persons whom Henry hoped to conciliate and use as allies against Spain, designs which the language and the intrigues of De Bouillon seriously obstructed. In addition to his grievance as a Huguenot,

* Birch.

CHAP. XXVII.

Bouillon had others in common with the noblesse. The richer grew king and state, he declared the more parsimonious and illiberal grew the former.* Want of confidence was added to that of generosity and justice. The tale of every informer was greedily believed at court, and when received, instead of being referred for consideration to men of birth and station, were examined and controlled by mere clerks, *gens de peu.* These last had also been Biron's complaints, and the informer who had betrayed him, implicated Bouillon also in dealings with Spain. Summoned to answer these accusations, the Duc de Bouillon, alarmed by the fate of Biron, declined to obey the order, and as a Protestant claimed to be tried by a mixed court. That of Languedoc sat at Castres, and before it De Bouillon presented himself. On its declining to hear him, he withdrew to Geneva. His arrival was opportune. The Duke of Savoy had just been foiled in a nocturnal attempt upon it, and De Bouillon appeared as the defender of the great Protestant bulwark, which Henry apparently, though not really, had abandoned.

The Huguenots were much agitated by the king's simultaneous prosecution of De Bouillon and apparent indifference to the fate of Geneva. In a synod held at Gergeau in 1601, the religionists resolved to levy arms for the assistance of that city†, whilst the new taxes in the same region were universally refused to be paid. A long list of infractions of the edict was at the same time forwarded to the king, who sought to mollify the Huguenots by allowing them to appoint deputies for the better defence and observance of their rights. But since then Henry had given fresh cause of mistrust, by his re-establishment of the Jesuits, and adoption of one

* The Duc de Bouillon's pension was reduced in 1600 from 40,000 ducats to 10,000, the others in a similar proportion. Winwood's Mem. p. 367.

† Winwood to Cecil, May 23, 1601.

of that body to be his confessor. So far were the passions and zeal of the Huguenots influenced by these acts, that at the synod held by them at Gap in 1603 they declared it a formal article of their creed that the Pope was antichrist.

Henry had once conceived the hope of uniting and amalgamating the two religions. Duplessis-Mornay, to whom he communicated his purpose, did not think it courteous or prudent to declare its impossibility, but merely observed that the necessary preliminary to any such understanding was to exclude the Pope and his power, and to render the French Church Gallican. But this did not suit the political views of the king, who sought to dispute with Spain, if not wrest from it, that supreme influence at Rome which made it the chief of Catholic Europe. Henry was a prince without scruples, and so devoid of hatred, that when he was about to remarry he would have grasped at the offer of a Spanish infanta. The royal councils came, naturally perhaps, to be composed of men of opposite political opinions, of those Catholics who had rallied to him, as well as of those political Protestants who adhered to him. Villeroy led the former party, and never ceased to impress upon the king that the true source of power for a king of France was to be the chief of Catholicism. He urged him in consequence to gratify Rome by the adoption of the Jesuits, and, by joining its scheme of placing a Catholic king on the throne of England, aid in extending the religion and politics of the south of Europe over the north. On the other hand were Sully, De Bouillon, Sancy, Duplessis-Mornay, strenuous for pursuing the old policy of Protestant alliance and hostility to the House of Austria. The influence of these statesmen was indeed much diminished by their mutual jealousies and disagreements, Bouillon going the whole length with the Huguenots, whilst Sully seemed to care little how humble a position the Huguenots occupied in

CHAP. XXVII.

France, provided France, aided by the north, marched to overthrow the supremacy of Spain and of the House of Austria.

Henry sought to combine what was best of the two policies. He looked to conciliate Rome without adopting its injustice and intolerance, and at the same time hold friendship with Elizabeth and with the Dutch and the German Protestants, at least till he had humbled Spain. It was difficult to find zealous servants, Catholic and Protestant, for carrying out this double aim. Villeroy indeed was a pliant minister, who bowed to his sovereign, whilst indirectly furthering his own policy. The League, fortunately for Henry, had not left a chief of eminence or talent. The Duke of Guise was null; he of Lorraine wavering; the Duke of Mercœur had gone to fight in Hungary. The Constable Montmorency kept aloof from court, and "had no credit."* The only Catholic attempt to dispute Henry's power, was that of the Duke of Savoy and of Biron—it has been seen with what result. On the Protestant side of the council board Sully was not so facile as Villeroy in matters of economy and of high policy. But he was all as much so in affairs of religion, not even, says Winwood, opposing the re-establishment of the Jesuits. His moderation at one time was indeed so great, that the king conceived hopes of converting him, offering him one of his daughters by Gabrielle and the constable's staff, if he would conform. But the example of Sancy did not tempt him; this Huguenot personage had rallied to the Catholic faith with tears and great outward signs of contrition, which so disgusted Henry, as to make him exclaim, "All that Sancy now wants is the turban." Sully remained Protestant and loyal. Turenne, Duc de Bouillon, and La Tremouille, on the contrary, sought to take guarantees against the monarch's fickleness, or the

* Letter of Sir Henry Neville, in Winwood.

ill-will of his successor, by organising the Huguenot party, and strengthening it for resistance. La Tremouille died in this year, and De Bouillon remained alone. He no doubt had an understanding with Biron, though he did not go the same length, and he sought not only to fortify Sedan, but to make it a second La Rochelle, the stronghold and the capital of French Protestantism in the north. He established an academy as well as a splendid church there, and assumed the state of a prince of the empire rather than of a French noble.

Had Henry remained a Protestant, or Sully been a political one, they would have favoured Bouillon's designs rather than taken umbrage at them. Isolated in the north, Sedan would have been a useful check upon the ultra-Catholics of Lorraine, and of the Spanish archduke in Flanders, with whom he could not sincerely ally. But Henry dreaded an independent partisan, and Sully was jealous of any, especially a Huguenot, rival. The former, therefore, resolved to humble De Bouillon, and Sully burned to employ his new artillery against Sedan. It was first necessary to pacify the provinces of the south and east, where Huguenots and moderate Catholics, excited by the successive conspiracies of Biron and the Count d'Auvergne, renewed once more their complaints of excessive taxation and want of employ— the *politiques* of the region professing indignation at the too rigid punishment of Biron, and the Huguenots of the dangerous preference shown to the Jesuits, whom Henry sought to introduce everywhere.* The time had arrived for the Huguenots to give up their towns of surety, and Henry was prepared to demand

* Notably into Bearn and La Rochelle. When the king was negotiating with Pope Paul V. the reconciliation of the Venetians with the Holy See, his envoy, Du Perron, was obliged to represent to his Holiness the impossibility of persuading the republic to admit the Jesuits. "Oh," rejoined the Pope, "King Henry has got the Jesuits into Constantinople, and surely he cannot want the power to get them into Venice." Letter of Cardinal du Perron to the king, Fontanieu, 452.

CHAP. XXVII.

them. He had also denied them the right, conferred by the edict of Nantes, of holding synods and assemblies. They must have the permission he insisted, and refused the permission unless they consented to sit under the presidency of one whom he should appoint. As they demurred to this, he now waived his demand, and merely insisted that Sully should attend their meeting, which he sanctioned to take place at Châtellerault, but without either the quality of president, or the right to be present at their discussions. Sully exerted himself with success to tranquillise their fears, although he did not persuade them of all he desired. He told them, in their own interest, that they were not the stronger for having a number of weak and scattered garrisons in so many towns. Three or four strong cities, well fortified and defended, would give them, he said, much more security. As they suspected the disinterestedness of this counsel, Sully waived it, and promised them the possession of the towns of safety for seven years after 1606, as well as pay for the diminished number of their troops.* What he chiefly won from them was their consent to cease their triennial political assemblies, they, instead, choosing general deputies, from amongst whom the king would select two to reside at his court, and watch over the interests of the reformed religion. This did not prevent another political assembly of the Huguenots at Gergeau in 1608; but the king experienced no marked trouble on the part of the religionists during the remainder of his reign.†

After Sully's successful dealings with the Protestants, Henry himself came south in the autumn of 1605, and

* The original sum of 180,000 crowns to be paid to the Huguenot garrisons, was reduced in 1605 to half the amount, on account of the diminished number of these garrisons, as of their army in general. Duplessis-Mornay, tom. x.

† Haag. France Protestante, 1st and 6th vols.

caused several of those implicated in the late plots to be arrested. Amongst these were the brothers Lucques, agents of Spain. A court was held at Limoges, called that of the *grand jours*, where, as well as at Toulouse, some of the guilty were decapitated. The Duc de Bouillon had large domains and important towns in Poitou. Turenne, from whence he took his name, was of the number. He forbade resistance anywhere, and all submitted to the king. The most serious portion of the plots of the reign had been a design to deliver up Marseilles to the Spaniards, who had long desired to possess that port, and were ready to risk a war for the purpose. A captain, who had entered into the intrigue with the Spanish envoy Zuniga, was tried, condemned, and executed in Paris for the act in the last days of 1605.

Henry then ordered his forces to march in the direction of Sedan, Sully bringing a formidable park of artillery, with which he promised to batter down the walls in a few days. Powerful intercessions were, however, at work for De Bouillon. Elizabeth was no more, but Cecil was still in office; and he, who believed less in De Bouillon's treason than in Henry's hatred to him as a Protestant, joined in the general opinion of the religionists, that the present expedition was against them.* The German princes held the same sentiments, and expressed them so strongly, that Henry, as he approached Sedan, wrote to the Landgrave of Hesse that he was ready to give assurance, under his hand, if necessary, that if De Bouillon would submit he should lose neither rights nor sovereignty.† Villeroy, who wished to save De Bouillon, because he was the rival of Sully, was sent forward to treat, whilst Sully him-

* Queen Elizabeth, at Cecil's suggestion, had formerly interfered for De Bouillon, at which Henry was as much enraged as Elizabeth had been at Henry's previous intercession for Essex.

† Rommel. Letter of Henry to the Landgrave.

CHAP. XXVII.

self was, under one pretext or another, kept away from the negotiations. They succeeded, and De Bouillon, assured of pardon, came to the king's quarters and made his full submission. Henry and his queen made their solemn entry into Sedan, and gave for a time the government to an officer in whom De Bouillon had full confidence. The principal penalty inflicted on him was the deprival of the large amount of customs which he raised on commodities passing through the frontier town of Sedan. The king set up barriers and established officers of his own, which were not removed till the next reign. Thus were dissipated the mutual enmities between the king and his most powerful Huguenot subject, founded upon a vague suspicion rather than upon any real antagonism of views or interests. Duplessis-Mornay expresses a doubt as to which was most mortified, the duke at being compelled to make submission, or Sully, disappointed in the vaunted display of his artillery.

Having humbled all domestic or semi-domestic foes, and established what no French monarch had ever done, the uniformity and supremacy of his rule from the Flemish to the Spanish and Italian frontier, having introduced economy and order into his finances, some regularity in his system of justice, and efficiency at least in one branch of military service, the ordnance, Henry had leisure to turn his views to foreign relations, and to the state of Europe in general. What chiefly aroused his attention and awakened his anxiety was the malevolent hostility of the House of Austria, which had never ceased since the peace of Vervins to support the foreign and suborn the domestic enemies of France. Henry himself, at the time of the conclusion of this peace, was not indeed more serious in his stipulations. He was not satisfied with having the dominions and the forces of the House of Austria to

the north, to the south, and to the east of him. And whilst accepting and signing a treaty of peace he urged England and Holland not to follow his example, purporting, at a more favourable opportunity, to come to their succour and renew the war. In the meantime he indulged with his favourite Sully in raving and imagining a more normal and more happy state of Europe.

The principle which they laid down — a principle long known and acted upon in Italy, and now transferred from that narrow theatre to the wider one of Europe — was the balance of power. Spain had dominions too exclusive and too vast. Philip the Second had acknowledged, not the injustice, but the inconvenience of this, by making over the Netherlands to the German branch of his house, in the person of the archduke. This created no division of interest or affection; and the most obvious care of a monarch of France must have been to free himself from the pressure of a power which environed him. Nor was Henry the first or the only sovereign to feel this necessity. Queen Elizabeth pointed it out at the time of the treaty of Vervins, making use of an argument and a truth which has never ceased to be felt and acted upon, that the first policy of an independent sovereign ought to be to put down those princes who aimed at universal empire. Henry fully admitted the justice of the assertion, but the disarray and the impoverishment of his kingdom were such as to allow him no alternative save that of peace.

His withdrawal from the war was a serious injury to the Protestant cause. The Spaniards took advantage of it to pour their troops into the Duchy of Cleves, and those districts of the Rhine which lie between Holland and Germany, which had embraced the doctrines of the Reformation, and which they sought

CHAP. XXVII.

to conjoin with their dukedom of Burgundy.* The estates and Prince Maurice, indeed, gallantly resisted. To divert the Spanish forces from the Rhine, they seized and fortified Ostend, and obtained from Queen Elizabeth some thousand English, with Sir Francis Vere as a governor. Elizabeth, then expecting a Spanish invasion in Ireland, begged of Henry to succour Ostend. This was the occasion upon which he sent Biron to her, and he himself came to Calais. He was peculiarly jealous of English attempts to get possession of ports on the continent. They already had Flushing, and he was doubtful whether he ought to succour the English in Ostend. Elizabeth, at the same time, came to Dover, and hoped for an interview with the French king; but he, knowing she would importune him to break with Spain, or at least succour Ostend, and reimburse, perhaps, the past loans, avoided the interview. He, however, sent Sully across the channel without any overt mission; and that minister has recorded his conversation with Elizabeth.

The queen pointed out to Sully how much it was the policy and duty of France, as well as England, to humble Spain. She pressed an offensive and defensive alliance for the purpose, on the condition that neither France nor England should seek any territorial aggrandisement by the war; at least, that neither should appropriate any part of Flanders. Sully fully agreed with this, and represented it as his own view and that of his sovereign, that the balance of power should be maintained in Europe, dividing it into some fifteen states, whose delegates should meet in a kind of Amphictyonic council, to settle differences and avoid war. And that of these the seventeen provinces of Holland should form one constituted as a republic; whilst the

* Discours de Cleves. MS. Colbert, 35. This document represents the Duke of Cleves as a child in mind and body, and his wife, a princess of Lorraine, all in favour of the Jesuits.

Swiss cantons, augmented by the addition of Alsace, Franche Comté, and Tyrol, should form another. This scheme Sully completed by the establishment of three religions—the Lutheran, the Calvinist, and the Catholic. The more serious question of internal government was to be solved by monarchs "governing amicably, and demanding merely what their subjects might willingly and cheerfully obey."

It is much to be doubted that Henry, however he may have humoured his friend Sully in such imagination, sincerely adopted, or seriously proposed, these as aims. Certainly, at Calais, instead of hearkening to the proposals which Sully brought him from Elizabeth, he, on the contrary, took Villeroy's advice, hastily returned to Paris without seeing the envoy from the states, and left Ostend to its own fate and Elizabeth.*

There were at the time, unfortunately, many causes of estrangement between France and England, of which a French monarch, inimical to the latter, might avail himself. By the peace with Spain the French came to enjoy and to monopolise the trade between the north and south of Europe. English ships and captains, now acccustomed to prey upon Spanish vessels and to interrupt the galleons, failed often in respecting the French flag, and exercised the right of search in an overhand and unwarrantable manner. The French made loud complaints, to which the English admiralty did not always pay due attention. The French retaliated by a measure which had the indirect effect of preventing the sale of English cloth, at which the manufacturers complained. Added to this, Elizabeth's constant demands for repayment of sums lent, and the French king's coquetting with the Scotch, and it may be conceived that the relations between the courts were not at all amicable.

Still the ill-will of Philip the Third towards France

* Winwood's correspondence of this period.

CHAP. XXVII.

seemed unaltered; and when James the First ascended the English throne, it was at once feared that his love of peace and want of money would overrule his Protestantism, and prompt him to accept such terms of peace as Spain might offer. Sully was sent over soon after the death of Elizabeth. His high character and sententious wisdom made a great impression upon James, and even persuaded that monarch to renew the old league between France and England for the maintaining of the states of Holland against Spain. But the arrival of a solemn embassy from the courts of Madrid and Brussels soon effaced the results of Sully's eloquence. Fashion had its influence in those days as in later ones; and the Spaniards were then considered a nobler, a wealthier, and a more romantic people than the French. Ladies, especially, preferred the Don to the Monsieur; and James's queen openly set the example of a preference for Spanish over French. This predilection of policy and of taste led inevitably to a reconciliation between England and Spain, and to an abandonment of that Dutch commonwealth which Elizabeth had fostered. Nor did the Protestant party in England exert itself as it might have done to oppose such a course. The Cecils had always mistrusted France and Henry; and notwithstanding the disinterestedness preached by Sully, it was suspected in England that Henry the Fourth cherished the old design of the Valois to render France mistress of the Low Countries.* The existing arrangement by which these provinces had been assigned to a prince of the German House of Austria, was more satisfactory to the English politician than any other. Franche Comté having been joined to them, it was a resuscitation of the old house and empire of Burgundy, which might prove the best check

* It is indeed manifest from the royal instructions to his envoy Reaux, that Henry looked at one time to replace Spain as sovereign of Holland. See Jeannin, Negotiations.

to French, and the best sedative to Spanish, ambition. Henry thus lost the English alliance, not having known how to make use of it when a spirited queen held the British sceptre. Nor was he more successful in procuring that of the German Protestants. His conversion, his coquetting with Rome, his preference of Catholics in France, and even of the Jesuits, inspired his oldest allies beyond the Rhine with lukewarmness, if not suspicion. Yet he had gone the length of inspiring one of their principal sovereigns, the Landgrave of Hesse, with hopes of his again avowing himself Protestant*; and this was accompanied by his resumption of the old scheme of Francis the First to be elected Emperor of Germany. The proposal was universally scouted, and Henry transferred his patronage to the House of Bavaria, which he hoped to raise up as the competitor of that of Austria. But this scheme also failed; and though Henry succeeded in maintaining the League of Protestant princes beyond the Rhine, and his position of protector thereof, he still allowed many opportunities to pass for strengthening the Protestant cause in the north. Disputes had arisen between competitors to the archiepiscopal dignities of Cologne and of Strasburg, as well as for toleration in Aix-la-Chapelle, in any of which Henry might have taken a prominent, a decisive, and necessarily a successful part.† But he was too much a political Roman Catholic to adopt such a course, and his conduct with regard to Germany was thus vacillating, uninfluential, and feeble.

A disgusting monument of the smallness, trickiness,

* This declaration of Henry's to the landgrave that he was still a Protestant at heart (Rommel), coupled with what he observed to his queen, Marie of Medicis, that his conversion had been a feigned one until the time of the controversy between Duperron and Duplessis-Mornay, which made him a sincere Catholic (mentioned in the Memoirs of Richelieu), may be placed, one against the other, and stand as proofs rather of Henry's loose way of talking than of anything else.

† Jeannin.

CHAP. XXVII.

insincerity, and dishonesty of the politicians of the age, survives in the Negotiations of President Jeannin, the French plenipotentiary to the states of Holland, which reveal the petty manœuvres and unworthy aims of all parties in settling the terms of peace between Spain and Holland. The Dutch were the last allies whom Henry had to depend upon for support in resisting Spain. He was therefore mortified to find that, although these republicans had warned him of their intentions, they had still concluded an eight months' truce without waiting his approval or advice.* He interfered immediately with proffers and reproaches. The Dutch replied simply and plainly, that if France and England would support them strenuously in continuing the war with Spain, they would prefer that alternative ; but that if those countries would neither of them come forward, they must make peace. France and England, however, no longer agreed. Each suspected his ally of seeking separate interests, and the states saw that a close alliance with one would draw on the enmity of the other. Peace with Spain therefore predominated in Dutch councils, provided it could be had on honourable terms. The aim of Henry was either to induce the Dutch not to make peace, or to conclude it on such terms, and in such a spirit, as should leave them free to break it at any convenient time, and join with him in a renewal of war. He even proposed, in the midst of the negotiations for peace, a treaty of the Protestant powers and himself, directed eventually against Spain. England would not join in it ; and Holland merely made use of French support to remain firm in its demand of full rights and recognition from its former dominators.

Though anxious for peace, and indeed compelled to it,

* His letter to La Boderie, April 1607. For the negotiations of the epoch, see La Boderie's despatches, which are published, as well as the negotiations of Jeannin. The despatches of De Beaumont, who preceded La Boderie, are in the Bib. Imperiale. MSS. Sup. Français.

CHAP. XXVII.

the Court of Spain shrank from the humiliation of granting all they asked to the Dutch. It despatched one of its chief nobles, Don Pedro de Toledo, to France. The overtures which he made were the double marriage of the second son of the Spanish king with a daughter of Henry, and of the infanta with the dauphin. As the present ruler of the Low Countries had no issue, they might be settled on the Spanish prince in reversion. And France should undertake to oblige the Dutch to submit, after the expiration of the truce, to the same sovereign as Flanders. The king and even Villeroy rejected these insidious and unscrupulous proposals. The latter was not indeed opposed to the Spanish marriages. But he joined the king fully in avoiding any act that would alienate the Dutch, fling them into the arms of England, and destroy the influence which Henry still flattered himself he held as head of the Protestant League.*

From the complicated efforts and intrigues of their allies the Dutch managed to extricate themselves as successfully as from the great military struggle, and peace was concluded between Holland and Spain the 29th of May, 1609, on the great condition of national independence, and a freedom of trade equal to that granted to other countries. Neither did the Dutch cede what France joined Spain in demanding, the admission of Catholics and Jesuits to their country. This accord put an end to the long struggle between the two religions in the north-west of Europe, and removed the principal scene of their antagonism from Flanders to Germany, whither, in order to watch its progress, we must proceed beyond the Rhine.

At this point it is natural to pause, and cast a retrospect over the field occupied by the contending religions during half a century. In the course of the

* Henry's letter of July, 1608, to De Breves. MSS. Bethune, 8965.

CHAP. XXVII.

narrative, the many and various circumstances which influenced the decline of Protestantism have been noted. It may now be observed how different the struggle was at its commencement from what it became towards the close. In 1560 the Reformation was a mental protest against falsehood and abuse. It was a strong and conscientious conviction that rushed to combat, because it was treated as criminal, without calculating the means or providing the resources for a lengthened contest. At the close, the spirit—at least the religious spirit—had evaporated. The antagonism was that of political, personal, and class interests. What began as a spiritual, ended as a material combat; and the true statement of the result is, that Protestantism succumbed to Catholicism, because the French monarch succumbed to the Spanish.

The military decision implied and drew after it the religious. If the Protestants were the losers, their creed had little to do with it. Their inferiority lay in their not developing their true strength, and in never marshalling or sending forth either their peasants or their citizens to the field. That duty was left to the nobles, who gradually deserted the poor camp for the rich, the simple for the gentle, the cause of freedom and of the commons for that of aristocracy and authority. They formed, unfortunately, the only French soldiers of the time. Henry had no infantry, save such as he could borrow from abroad; and hence he was unable to cope with the Spaniards, prevent the Prince of Parma from raising his sieges, or compel him to battle. Henry was thus, what Napoleon styles him, merely a brilliant captain of cavalry. Hence he was defeated as a general in the field, and compelled, in consequence, to give up his creed and party as a politician. It is revolting and humiliating to think, that the prevalence of religious opinion should depend on the fortune of arms, the success of a general, or the

genius of a man. And yet, we must confess, that the Spanish Philips extinguished Protestantism in France, whilst Gustavus Adolphus saved it in Germany. So much is the most spiritual part of our nature dependent upon human skill and material events.

Henry himself felt that the fight had been ill fought; and the last twelve years of his reign were employed in meditating and preparing to reverse the decision. With this view he completely remodelled his army, levied and disciplined that French foot,* which, some years later, under Condé, defeated the Spaniards at Rocroy, rendered his artillery perfect, and founded the military organisation by which his successors attained their grandeur. With this he was determined to renew the war. He considered the combat as merely suspended, and the struggle between him and Spain one to be inevitably renewed. With this view he directed his diplomatic efforts to encourage the German Protestants, and to induce them to league under his protection, and seize the first opportunity for deposing and even dethroning the House of Austria in that country. The imperial family was itself torn by the dissensions of its princes, who placed themselves at the head of rival factions. And the factions of Germany in that day were all religious. One was the ultra-Catholic, which, inspired by the Jesuits, looked to nothing less than to recognise and reimpose the old ascendency of Rome, even over Protestants, by craft, or by violence. Opposed to them was the Catholic partisans of tolerance, who proposed to live at peace with Protestant princes, and to respect the reformed religion in their dominions. The German family of Austria, to do it justice, produced as many princes in favour of the latter as of the former policy. The Arch-

* There were 20,000 French infantry in the French army, which Henry had collected for the last campaign, and but 6000 horse. For Henry's military reorganisation in the first years of the new century, see Dupleix, Poirson, Duplessis-Mornay, Avis sur une milice Française, &c.

CHAP. XXVII.

Duke Matthias proved himself the champion of tolerance, and at one time seemed certain to prevail. But the emperor and his future successor Ferdinand embraced the principle of intolerance, and were strenuously supported by the professors of high Catholicism. They triumphed, and the Protestant princes had to look to arms for their defence. Henry approved the League, and promised in sincerity to be its protector. An opportunity was soon offered for his coming forward in that character.

The importance of that tract of country which extends along the Rhine between Germany and Holland, consisting of the united Duchies of Cleves, Berg, and Juliers, with the counties of La Marc and Ravensburg, had been foreseen by Charles the Fifth, who gave his sister, Sforza's widow, in marriage to the reigning prince. Their son, an infant in mind and body, had no male issue, but his wife, of the house of Lorraine, contrived to shed government favours on the Jesuits. No resistance was offered, consequently, to the Spanish troops which were poured into the province after the treaty of Vervins. The duke expired in March 1609. The husbands of his two eldest daughters, the Elector of Brandenburg and the Count of Neuborg, had the foremost claim, but the Duke of Saxony disputed it in virtue of a promise of reversion made to him by the emperor.* This potentate, who asserted that he and his council were the rightful arbiters, espoused the cause of Saxony, Brandenburg and Neuburg, supported by Henry, arming and occupying a portion of the contested territory. Whilst the French king espoused what was really the Protestant cause, he pretended that it was a mere dispute

* The claims of each, and indeed all the documents connected with the disputed succession, are to be found in the MS. Dupuy, 193. The instructions to and despatches from Bongars show Henry's views and negotiations. Winwood's Memorials, vol. iii., and Carlyle's Frederick, vol. i., also contain ample information on the subject.

of succession, altogether without a religious motive.* The emperor upheld the right of Lutheran Saxony, on condition of it separating its cause from that of the Calvinists. Protestantism, indeed, was nearly lost in Germany, owing to the rivalry of its two sects. Whatever influence those of his counsellors who leaned to Spain might have hitherto had upon Henry, was completely overturned by his own conviction and Sully's representations, that this affair of Cleves was his last opportunity. For that opportunity his active minister could show the monarchy to be well prepared. The finances were in perfect order, exhibiting an annual receipt of twenty-six millions of livres, and seventeen millions in store.† The alliance of all Protestant princes could be counted on; Prince Maurice was eager to break the truce so irksome to him; even James the First was ready to join 4000 Englishmen to the armies of Henry. But a powerful diversion in the south, such as would divert Spanish efforts from Flanders, was considered requisite. For this Henry turned to Savoy. Its prince, disgusted with the Spaniards for not aiding him when crushed by Henry, renewed his proposals for a league with that monarch to Cardinal de Joyeuse as he passed through Turin in 1607. He again proposed that French and Piedmontese armies should conquer Milan, his eldest son espousing the eldest daughter of Henry as the seal of a close alliance. Henry did not reject the offer, but it was allowed to slumber, and the proffer of Spain, through Don Pedro de Toledo, 1608, for intermarriages and alliance alienated the Duke of Savoy from France. And this alienation grew almost to a quarrel through the intermeddling of the Count of Soissons, and the insult offered to a French diplomatic agent. The duke, in the spring of 1609, was on the

* Henry's message to the Archbishop of Mayence by Boissise. MS. Dupuy, 193.

† Sully; Poirson, Hist. de Henry IV.

CHAP. XXVII.

point of sending his son Philibert to Spain, and being completely reconciled to that court, when an envoy appeared at Turin with large offers from Henry. The latter consented to the marriage with the Prince of Piedmont, declared his resolve to make war on Spain, and accept the alliance of Savoy for the conquest of the Milanese. An annual pension of one hundred and fifty thousand livres was conferred by Henry upon Prince Philibert, and lesser ones upon the other members of the ducal family. All the conquests beyond the Alps were to accrue to the duke, the king merely looking to get Savoy and Nice for his share, with the coast toward Genoa.* The Duke of Savoy greedily closed with these brilliant offers.

Henry had taken great trouble to settle, some years previous, the differences between the Venetians and the Pope. It arose from the republic having banished the Jesuits. Spain fanned the flame of discord, and hoped to produce a war. But Henry interfered, induced the Venetians to grant far more than they desired, and frightened the Pope with the threat that he would lose North Italy, as Leo the Tenth had lost North Germany, if he did not compound with the latitudinarians of Venice. The republic in gratitude joined Henry's league, and was to be recompensed with the district called the Gira d'Adda. Florence, too, offered to join it, but its government, as well as the Pope, laboured all through to produce reconciliation, not widen the breach. In addition to these grave and political inducements to war, occurred one of those incidents which occupy so large a space in Henry's motives and life. The monarch of fifty-five became enamoured of Char-

* This is not only mentioned by Bassompierre, but the Mémoires de Richelieu affirm, that Henry confessed to the Queen his resolution to conquer Milan, Montferrat, Genoa, and Naples, giving the Duke of Savoy the greater part of the two former provinces in exchange for Nice and Savoy, and erecting Piedmont and the Milanese into a kingdom, to be called that of the Alps.

lotte de Montmorency, daughter of the constable, and whom, it is to be feared, he caused to be married to the Prince of Condé, from the belief that he would make an imbecile and despised husband.* Condé, indeed, was an ill-conditioned personage, rash in speech, quarrelsome in manners, universally disliked, and of appearance not calculated to fix the affections of a young wife. Henry did not conceal his inclinations nor mask his gallantry, and Condé having first brought his wife to Picardy, at last, to escape the king's importunities, compelled her to set off with him for the Low Countries.† The fugitive prince was received by the archduke and the infanta, who declined to deliver them up, Condé spoiling his very legitimate cause for withdrawal by undertaking a journey through Italy to Spain and announcing hostile intentions towards his sovereign.

The resentment of the king against the archduke for retaining the Prince of Condé was as great as that which he felt on learning the support which the same prince was giving to the Austrian party in Cleves and Juliers. The Archduke Leopold had invaded that country, placed a Spanish garrison in Juliers, and seized a small castle near Aix-la-Chapelle. Henry's reply was the uniting of 30,000 men at Chalons, which he proposed to lead himself ostensibly against Juliers, but, in the event of the archduke's showing himself hostile, he was determined to attack the Flemish lines on the Meuse, blockade the coast at the same time, and, in fact, take possession of Belgium. Lesdiguières was to lead 14,000 men across the Alps to aid the Duke of Savoy in the conquest of Lombardy. The Duke de la Force was to invade Spain by the Pyrenees, and give the generals of that empire sufficient to do at

* Bassompierre.

† Married in March, the Princess of Condé, was carried off by her husband at the end of August. L'Estoile. For Condé's flight see Winwood's Letters to Lord Salisbury. Memorials, vol. iii. p. 93.

CHAP. XXVII.

home, where the Moors of Valencia had promised to rise.*

Although the Pope manifested no suspicion of this great display of force, in which so many Catholics joined, the true state of the case did not escape the zealot politicians of the Catholic party. They saw plainly that if Henry attained his aim of rendering himself master of the Low Countries and expelling the House of Austria from the imperial throne and from Italy, he must necessarily, even if unintentionally, achieve the triumph of the Protestants, or what to them was as bad, of the tolerant Catholics. The alarm therefore was great, and their indignation heightened by the reflection that the king had duped them. His reception of the Jesuits into France, and even into the post of royal confessor, had been a blind to cover his proposed hostility to the cause for which they struggled. But at so late a time, how could they renew hostility, and combat that vast preponderance and power which Henry had attained, and which the Jesuits had suffered if not fostered? There was but one way—assassination. Such, no doubt was the view of religion and of the best modes of saving it, which prevailed at Madrid, as well as in the convents and conciliabules of the ultra-Catholic faction. The warlike enterprise which the king meditated against the Catholic powers, as well as his co-operation in the independence of Protestant Holland, had renewed the old venom of the League, and its expression both in books and from the pulpits. Such doctrines had infected the mind of a half crazy schoolmaster of Angoulême named Ravaillac, who left his home at one time with the wild idea of persuading the king to abandon his purposes of war and

* Navarète's Collecion contains a letter of Cardenas, the Spanish envoy in Paris, to Philip the Third, dated April 5, 1610, giving an account of a conversation with Henry. Spain, the latter complained, sought to pit Condé against his (Henry's) children.

tolerance of the Protestants. Driven back by hunger and destitution, the idea of regicide took firm hold of him; and he again left Angoulême at Easter, 1610, with the determination to slay the king if he could not speak with him.

Henry was absorbed in his preparations for war, and eager to resume his old campaigning habits. He had appointed the queen to be regent in his absence, with a council. Her love of splendour made her lay greater stress on the ceremony of the coronation, and of her public entry into Paris, than upon any other subject. Henry deprecated the expense and the delay, but was too good-natured to disappoint Marie's desire. It was arranged, therefore, that the queen's coronation should take place on the 14th of May, and the king's departure on the 19th.

The *sacre*, as the coronation was called, took place with all due magnificence early in the day. Henry sought some repose on his couch after it, but was uneasy, and could not sleep, tormented by astrologic predictions of ill, and by his own mind giving unusual weight to such presentiments. To relieve the dulness of the hour, he resolved to pay a visit to Sully at the arsenal. Even in this he hesitated; but at length he set forth in his coach. It was a vehicle without doors or panels*, the roof supported on pillars, the intervals filled by curtains, which for the moment had been tied up or removed. The Rue de la Ferronnerie being obstructed by carts, the foot attendants left the carriage, to make their way round by the market; and the guards did anything but guard it.† There was nothing, therefore, to prevent Ravaillac mounting on

* A print of the time preserved in MS. Fontanieu, represents this coach as we have described it.

† It exemplifies the bad effects of that universal abuse of the time, the venality of offices, that these idle body-guards, instead of being appointed by the king, were actually allowed to purchase their places.

CHAP. XXVII.

the wheel and striking his knife into the king's breast. Henry had scarcely time to exclaim "I am wounded," when the assassin struck another blow, which penetrated the heart. Henry the Fourth breathed his last.

Never, perhaps, not at least since the death of Henry the Fifth, did the demise of a monarch create such a change in the policies and prospects of Europe. The predominant and essential division of powers, throughout its modern world, was that of Protestant and Catholic. No other source of antagonism was worth taking into account. Though some princes, Henry not excepted, were actuated by territorial ambition, this, the first motive of sovereigns a century previous, was now thrust into secondary rank. The struggle of liberty, of the would-be free against the wilful despot, was also subordinate to that of religion. What gave great, perhaps undue, importance to Henry's design, was that it promised to complete and extend Protestant strength and independence. Such was the opinion of the world, such the sentiments of Ravaillac, which he had imbibed from the church and churchmen to which he belonged, and with whom he communicated. Yet one may be permitted to doubt if advantage would have accrued to Protestantism from Henry's success. He was marching to the subjugation of the country between the Rhine and Meuse, supported by the German Protestants and the Prince of Orange. The conquest of Juliers would have cut off the archduke in Brussels from communication with Germany, political and commercial. In case of his resistance, Henry was prepared to blockade his seaports in concert with the English, when Brabant and Flanders would have fallen an easy prey to French invasion. It was idle to say that the archduke would not have provoked war; but could Spain tolerate the invasion of the Milanese by the French? or would the Dutch army, under the Prince of Orange on the Meuse, have respected the archduke's neutrality? These things

were impossible, and the most probable result would have been the reduction of Belgium by France, a Catholic power, not like Spain, remote, but at the very doors of Brussels and of Antwerp, with ample means to complete and maintain its conquest. To what consequences such an event must immediately lead was manifest. England and Holland would at once have been converted from dormant allies into open enemies. Henry, diverted from his attempt upon Austria by the hostility of foes so near and so formidable, would have turned from German and Italian campaigns, and the old struggle of the previous century would have been renewed in Flanders. The death of Henry freed most probably England and Holland from this dire necessity, though it liberated the House of Austria from an antagonism which Henry was far too much a Catholic in politics to have prosecuted to any serious length.*

In his renowned scheme Henry was pursuing his own and his country's aggrandisement, going not with either of the great currents of the age, but athwart them, and seeking to turn them to his purpose. That they would have been too strong for him had he lived, there is little doubt. What is even a prince amidst these powerful currents of history and of fate? In truth, from the moment of his conversion, Henry incapacitated himself from leading any of the master movements of the epoch. A neutral in religion, he could not be, despite his efforts, anything but a neutral in politics. If, looking through the events of this important age, one should seek the nature and the scope of the providential aims which ruled it, it would be difficult to avoid concluding that the two religions, the one of tradition and submission, the other of mental freedom and inquiry, were destined both to survive,

* Henry spoke of the campaign he was about to undertake as short, and promised to return soon to Paris, abolish the venality of offices, and inaugurate other reforms. See Dupleix, Histoire de France.

CHAP. XXVII

both to counterbalance each other, and that there prevailed a law superior to all human order and design, forbidding one to crush or annihilate the other. I hope, there is nothing profane in this belief or supposition, that different aspects of the same great truth may be providentially maintained for a good and mutually improving purpose, and that creeds as well as men may thus be put upon their trial, and tested as to their moral worth and ameliorating influence.

Few monarchs had greater or better intentions than Henry the Fourth; but his efforts, instead of accomplishing his aims, terminated in results precisely the contrary. He became converted to Catholicism, with the settled purpose of establishing thereby at least toleration. Yet the system he founded became one of as complete intolerance as that of Spain. In the same spirit he looked to establishing a *débonnaire* and paternal mode of government; but as the mildness of it was based merely on his own character, whilst the principles of absolute monarchic authority were asserted and established in every shape and form, he left the rights, the creed, and the happiness of his subjects completely at the mercy of his successors and of their individual capacity and caprice. Henry the Fourth shaped the sceptre which Louis the Fourteenth wielded, which even in his hands became a curse to France and the world, in those of his successor a curse to themselves, to their dynasty, and to the kingdom.

Never was monarch more regretted than Henry. There was a universal paroxysm of grief at his untimely fate. And Ravaillac, who in his gloomy solitude had imagined he was to reap the popularity of Jacques Clement, was amazed to find that his deed excited nothing but execration. The substantial benefits that Henry had conferred on France were indeed incalculable; peace, order, prosperity, the gratification of national pride, the enjoyment of domestic security.

The tax-gatherer was no longer an arbitrary tyrant; the judge much less of a fanatic partisan; the government was solicitous and careful of manufactures and trade, not neglectful of education and the arts. Henry loved poetry and architecture as much as he did the chase. If he was to his people a father, he was to his courtiers a friend. He was too fond, indeed, of pleasure, though his pursuit of it did not become indecorous till his later years. His attachment to Gabrielle was constant and romantic. But when he lost her, he unfortunately tried to replace her, and to live his youth over again, as if years did not bring other sentiments and require strong abnegation. One turns with disgust from the dissoluteness which his contemporaries record. It is more pleasing to contemplate the king and his court through a glass which merely shows the prominent events and personages, and leaves degrading details in the shade. One likes to contemplate Sully in his rough honesty of speech and purpose, without the foibles of his vanity or greed; Villeroy the patient secretary, the disciple of Catherine de Medicis, becoming honest under an honest master. Bouillon, Lesdiguières, Duplessis, Rohan, La Force, are all great characters, the Huguenot nobles, indeed, bearing away the palm as men of capacity and principle. The League had corrupted their Catholic compeers, who had been called exclusively to share court favour and wield political influence, and who showed themselves every way unequal to the task, and unworthy of it.

CHAP. XXVIII.

LOUIS THE THIRTEENTH, TILL THE ADMINISTRATION OF RICHELIEU.

1610—1624.

CHAP. XXVIII.

SELDOM has the death of a monarch been followed by so complete a change as that of Henry the Fourth. The power of France about to be exerted in arms against the house of Austria, both in Germany and Italy, passed at once into the hands of an Italian princess who admired Spain, was secretly in communication with its court, and had no more cherished object than to be allied with it. Yet both Henry and Sully, with their anti-Spanish leanings, had still prepared the way for this great change. The Huguenot statesman had contributed to the Florentine match, and Henry had filled the council and the chief offices of state with personages in papal and Spanish interests, such as Villeroy, Sillery, and Jeannin.* About to depart upon his military expedition, he had appointed the queen regent, though certainly with a council of fifteen personages of no certain faction, who were to have almost equal power with herself. But her being already invested with the title greatly facilitated her grasping the reality, which she did by the advice of

* The printed materials from the reign of Louis the Thirteenth are so ample, as scarcely to require reference to manuscripts or letters. The Memoirs and the Letters of Richelieu, Sully, the Memoirs of Bassompierre, Fontenay-Mareuil, La Force, with others of the Michaud collection, chronicled every event year by year, and thus obviate the necessity of continued references.

the three statesmen whom we have mentioned, and by the aid of Epernon. The parliament was then sitting at the Augustins; and the chancellor, Sillery, who now assumed chief influence*, sent thither to have Marie acknowledged as regent. Epernon, who possessed most military power after the constable, with the appointment of all the officers of infantry, marshalled his guards†, and, entering the court, said to the judges that his sword, hitherto in the scabbard, must inevitably be drawn, if the queen was not declared regent. The judges bowed either to the threat, or to the conviction that Marie was, after all, the fittest regent; and they issued an *arrêt* in consequence. Of the three princes of the blood, the Count of Soissons, momentarily absent, was a turbulent intriguer, ever at variance with the late king; the Prince of Conti was imbecile; Condé at the court of the Spanish envoy of Milan. Even Sully could scarcely have opposed Marie's claim. Supposing that Henry's assassination was the signal of another St. Bartholomew's eve, he had shut himself up in the Bastille, and sent for his son-in-law with his Swiss regiments. He was afterwards convinced of the pacific intentions of the court, was induced to repair to it, and present his homage with the other courtiers to the queen. On the day after the catastrophe, she caused her son Louis the Thirteenth, then nine years of age, to be conducted to the parliament, and to hold what was called a bed of justice. There the young monarch was made to declare that he reposed all power in the hands of his mother.‡

After the successful assumption of the regency came the necessity of strengthening it by securing the adhesion of the princes and magnates, and of whatever might meditate resistance or rebellion. One firm and dignified

* Mémoires de Richelieu, end of liv. 8.

† Ibid., liv. 1. Registres du Parlement, published in the *Revue Rétrospective*.

‡ Ibid. Mercure Français, t. i.

CHAP. XXVIII.

personage who could wield a sword, and lead even but a small portion of the regular force, which Henry left, against the refractory, would soon, as was afterwards proved, have put down any and every malcontent. But Marie, like her relative Catherine de Medicis feared to employ a military chief who might become a rival, and, having at her command—what that queen had not—abundance of money, as well as lucrative positions to be bestowed, she preferred purchasing the adhesion of the magnates to commanding it. The Count of Soissons, the first prince of the blood, had his ill humour appeased by the government of Normandy, and 200,000 crowns. Those already possessed of the government of provinces demanded to divert the revenues to their own purposes, which Henry had never allowed, and insisted on having the reversion of such high commands for their sons. This weakness and abandonment of the very sources of the revenue, filled the patriotic and economic spirit of Sully with disgust. He resisted, protested, and sought to inspire the Prince of Condé on his return with good counsels, telling him that he had only to keep himself aloof from court intrigues, and from that universal greed and corruption, which was destroying the character and revenue of the state, in order to find respect and authority, and the eyes of all turn to him in hope. Condé was incapable of following such advice, and allowed himself to be gorged and flattered for the present like the rest.* The queen did not wish to displace Sully at first, but to make use of him in resisting exorbitant pretensions and demands. But he stood Cerberus-like to guard the treasure of the Bastille from the queen herself and her favourites, as well as from princely suitors. The usual mode of overcoming his obstinacy was to present a grant or debt, with the signature of the late king, and with the queen's attestation at

* MSS. Fontanieu, 463–4–5.

bottom, of the signature being genuine. Notwithstanding the latter, Sully frequently objected and even denounced the forgery. Whilst he thus made enemies of the greedy and influential, he retained no friends. The chiefs of the Huguenots, had they held together, might have imposed upon Marie de Medicis not only respect for their interests as a body, but the maintenance of the Protestant cause in Europe. But no two of the Huguenots agreed. Sully had made an enemy of the Duke de Bouillon, who, a far better courtier than he, now returned it with interest. Both hated Duplessis, whilst Lesdiguières stood aloof from all.

There was little hope therefore, when the great questions of war and of alliance came for discussion, that the policy of Henry the Fourth might continue to prevail. The queen held habitually two councils, a secret and intimate one, composed of her Florentine favourite Concini, the husband of her bedchamber woman, Eleanor Galigai, Epernon, Villeroy, Jeannin, and Sillery, the Spanish ambassador, the Papal nuncio, and Father Cotton, the Jesuit confessor of the late king. These did not make their appearance in the larger and more public council which the prince and the constable, the Cardinal de Joyeuse, the Dukes of Sully, Mayenne, Guise, and Bouillon attended. Before these personages was mooted the urgent question of what was to be done with the armies on foot, the alliances concluded, and the entire foreign policy of the late king.

How exclusively the great scheme of reducing the House of Austria hung upon the life and determination of Henry the Fourth appeared in the fact that, since his death, even Sully did not press for its execution. All that he looked for was that France should observe its stipulations and keep faith with its allies. Sully himself proposed dismissing the greater number of the troops collected both in Dauphiné and Lorraine, still retaining a sufficient number to accomplish the reduc-

CHAP. XXVIII.

tion of Juliers, and to give at least that semblance of support to the Duke of Savoy which would enable him to make his peace with Spain. This humble supplication in behalf of the honour of the late king, and of the safety of his allies, was too much for the queen, who had already settled the question in her secret council. She had but one idea, that of renewing the scheme of intermarriage between the French and Spanish princes and princesses, which Pedro di Toledo had come to propose in 1608, but which Henry had rejected at the price of abandoning the Dutch. When the queen stated this to Sully, the veteran statesman merely shrugged his shoulders, and withdrew. "We have fallen under the dominion of Spain," ejaculated he, "and it will be for the Huguenots to look to themselves."

His own withdrawal from office and from the council was the necessary consequence of the prevalence of a policy so distasteful to him. He resigned the superintendence of finance, which was given to Jeannin, and also the command of the Bastille, with his regiment of guards, for which, according to the custom of the day, he received 100,000 crowns. He remained grand master of the artillery, governor of Poitou and *Grand Voyer*. The intentions of Henry were so far carried out, that 6,000 men under the Maréchal de la Châtre marched to Juliers. Although the archduke had promised not to oppose them, he had not renewed his offer to the regent, and occupied in force the direct road to Juliers, "which ran from Mezières over the river of Semoy."* La Châtre took a circuitous march to avoid the archduke's territories, and in a month reached Juliers, which capitulated. The same respect to the alliances formed by the late king was not shown in the south, where the army of Lesdiguières was dissolved, one of the causes assigned being the dangers of

* Mémoires de ce que s'est passé au voyage de Clèves. MSS. Dupuy, 193, f. 114. Discours de Clèves. MSS. Colbert, 35.

trusting a Huguenot with such a force, and the Duke of Savoy was left to make his peace with Spain as he could. He despatched to Madrid his son Philibert, and showed his abandonment and contempt of France by renewing his endeavours to capture Geneva.*

Fontenay Mareuil, the cleverest and fullest memoir writer of the epoch, says, it must have been the will of Providence to subject sovereigns to the caprice of favourites, lest they should become too powerful, and the balance be destroyed between them. The chief influence over Marie de Medicis was exercised, as was soon but too evident, by her former bedchamber woman, Eleanor Galigai, and her husband Concini, a Florentine of somewhat higher birth. Henry had been induced to tolerate them for peace sake, but after his death their arrogance and rapacity knew no bounds, being increased by the meanness and readiness of the greatest in the land to ally with them and make use of their influence. Even Sully made trial of Concini, whom he could not induce to come to an understanding with him for good. The favourite spurned the honest and economic minister, and no sooner was the latter removed, and the treasure of the Bastille at Concini's disposal, than he purchased the Marquisate of Ancre from the family of Humières, for 100,000 crowns, the place of first gentleman of the bedchamber from the Duc de Bouillon for 60,000 crowns, and, as every grandee must have a *place de sureté* in those troublous times, he purchased the government of the fortresses of Peronne, Mont Didier, and Roye from the Marquis de Crequy for 200,000.†

It would prove a wearisome and disgusting task either to narrate or to peruse an account of the cabals, quarrels, duels, and claims of the personages and princes amongst each other, and with or against the

* MSS. Bethune, 9140. L'Etoile. March, 1611. La Noue was sent to defend it.

† L'Etoile mentions his staking 120,000 piastres at play about this time.

CHAP. XXVIII.

regent, during the three years which followed Henry's death. They formed a repetition of the conspiracies and alliances of the aristocracy against Catherine de Medicis half a century previous, except that at that time there were at least some noble characters and some serious aims. Whatever might be said of Chatillon or of Guise, they were animated by high views; but the political puppets who occupied the scene during Marie de Medici's regency, wanted not courage—indeed they were quite as ready as their predecessors to slay each other in duels — but purpose: at least, other purpose than immediate greed, they had none. There were some examples of ferocity in Louis the Thirteenth's early days, which reminded one of Charles the Ninth; the Chevalier de Guise meeting the Baron de Luz and running him through the body, and being universally censured for the act until he redeemed the murder by slaying the young De Luz, son of the baron, in a fiercely-contested duel. This spirit, which showed itself in private broils, never rose into a public sentiment. One would have thought that in the army which Henry had formed, and amongst the officers whom he had honoured with his patronage and friendship, there might have been some who burned to distinguish themselves in prosecuting that war against the House of Austria which the monarch had planned. Not one noble opposed the peace; not one soldier of note raised his voice in behalf of the spirited policy of the late king; scarcely even a Huguenot. For De Bouillon was immersed in the intrigues of Concini, and Lesdiguières tempted by the title of duke and peer, as he afterwards was by that of constable.

The very fact of the war having been a Huguenot policy, notwithstanding all Henry's efforts to disguise the truth, was sufficient to discredit it. From the period of the king's conversion, that religion had marvellously declined. Even under Henry, advancement

and office seemed due to the Roman Catholic first, and to the Huguenot merely in secondary rank. The ambitious deserted it, and the number of the Huguenot gentry diminished daily.* This was unfortunate; for in the rural districts the châteaux had been resorted to by the Huguenot peasantry for worship, and the conversion of the lord deprived them of church and pastor.† The governors of their garrisoned towns (*places de sureté*) turned also, and the religionists were in consequence expelled.‡ In such places as La Rochelle and Montauban, where the Protestants completely predominated, the doctrines and churches remained unshaken. But in those where the creeds were mixed, and where the Catholics were magistrates and municipal officers, persecution commenced, more fatal to the numbers of the Reformers than open violence or the stake. The clauses of the Edict of Nantes which protected life and liberty, might in general be respected; but all those which preserved equal rights were shamefully broken, even under the reign of Henry the Fourth. There was no justice for the Huguenot. The most violent bigots were chosen by the parliaments of the south to act as judges in the mixed tribunals, where they were supported by the Catholic baillis and seneschals. If a Protestant went to law, he was sure to be defeated; if he died, there were obstructions to his being buried; if he left orphans, they were made over, with his property, to Catholic guardians. He could neither make a will nor enter into a contract, as this must be done through a notary, and there were no Protestant notaries appointed. These iniquities fell as sorely on the middle class as the deprival of place or advancement did upon the gentry, and drove them from the fold of the Protestant church. The peasantry, in

* D'Andelot, youngest son of Coligny, was one of those converted about this time to Catholicism.

† Cahier de Saumur. Paris, 1611.

‡ Ibid. MSS. Bethune, 8681.

CHAP. XXVIII.

districts where they were numerous, were indeed little affected by this persecution of the legists, and handed down their creed from generation to generation. But of the 2000 churches enumerated in Condé's time, there remained only 750 at the commencement of the century, and not 500 at Henry's death.

It might be unfair to assert that all the recantations and desertions of this period were due to pressure or to interested motives. The Church of Rome had taken up a much better and stronger position. Its old supineness or corruption had given way to earnestness, talent, and learning. The Spanish system of eradicating heresy by the rack and the stake was exploded. But every severity short of it, calculated to overcome the resistance of the worldly, whilst not provoking the enthusiasm of the devout, was employed. In Germany especially, the system of coercion was largely and ruthlessly applied by the Archduke Ferdinand. Banishment or conversion were the ultimata offered to the Protestant. Had these had the conviction and ardour of the first converts, the persecution would at once have awakened civil war; but thousands now recanted rather than quit their homes. The easy nature of the South German from Carinthia to Suabia showed itself in their universal falling off. The North Germans were of more stubborn character, and they soon met the Catholic persecution with the avenging sword.*

In France there was no power able to banish Protestantism from the kingdom; nor would Henry the Fourth permit even the suggestion. Persecution did not pass the unjust partiality and insidious enmity which we have described. The Jesuits replaced the Dominicans, winning the favour of the voluptuous Henry by conniving at his dissolute life, and shaking the conviction even of thoughtless Calvinists by a dis-

* See Ranke's Popes for a sketch of the counter revolution in Germany.

play of learning and a force of logic which these began to want.*

No adequate cause has been assigned for the great decrease of Protestantism, and the diminution of its numbers, which took place in the last years of the sixteenth and the early portion of the seventeenth century. The sweeping persecution in Germany, or the insidious oppression practised in France, even when eked out by the learning and logic of the Jesuits, are not sufficient. It was probably the same cause, that brought the affluence to it at first, which half a century later led to its being deserted. A great portion of those who became converted to Protestantism at its rise, were so as much from a belief in its success, as from a conviction of its truth. It was this feeling which had prevailed with Catherine de Medicis. She at one time thought the Reformation to be progress and Catholicism a creed going out of favour and fashion. This opinion, soon refuted and effaced from her mind, still widely prevailed, and the victories of Henry the Fourth greatly served to corroborate it. His conversion, however, had a disastrously contrary effect. The act unmistakably implied his disbelief in the power or duration of Protestantism. He evidently deserted it from a belief, not of its falsehood, but of its being a weak and sinking cause. He followed it up by a peace with Spain, and an apparent abandonment of Holland, while almost similar results were produced in England by James succeeding to Elizabeth. In the great struggle which commenced in Germany, even Saxony, the native land of Luther, deserted the cause of the Reformation. The truce granted by Spain to Holland seemed but a respite till the great monarchy recovered strength to

* Haag (France Protestante) admits, that when the controversialists of his creed abandoned the Bible as their chief mainstay, to dispute with the Catholics what might be the ideas and opinions of the Fathers, they lost ground, and failed to interest or animate their flocks.

CHAP. XXVIII.

swallow up the miscreant province. Such was the cloud which overcame Protestantism in the first years of the seventeenth century.

Religious controversy, moreover, then assumed an altogether different shape and colour. It had previously been abstract, been confined to dogma, and looked merely to exercise its power over the domain of conscience. Wearied with the futility of disputes, the European world, as the seventeenth century opened, looked more to the practical results of the creed, than to its metaphysical foundation. Luther commenced by questioning the omniscience of the popes. Paolo Sarpi, an hundred years later, disputed their omnipotence. Under the cover and power of the religious fanaticism which was awakened by the Reformation, the popes and their party had exhumed and put forth their old pretensions to not merely spiritual but temporal supremacy, which Philip the Fair had contested and crushed. The right of deposing and slaying kings was more boldly claimed by the pope in 1600 than in 1100, and the spirit of Gregory the Seventh, without his power, was revived in Paul the Fifth. Against such principles and against Bellarmin, their expounder, the Paris parliament protested. And Marie de Medicis, who sought to stand well with both pope and Paris magistrates, had some difficulty in quelling the storm. Spiritual independence in France thus assumed the form of Gallicanism rather than Protestantism. Men grew indifferent to dogma, but resisted the absurd pretensions of Rome. And that long contest commenced between Jesuits and Jansenists, which lasted for more than a century. The quarrel, indeed, was not of great importance. Under an absolute king, the assertion of national independence in ecclesiastical affairs does not establish a lighter yoke or a more enlightened despotism. And the high priesthood of France weighed not the less heavily and

stupidly upon French intellect for Bossuet's declaring the national Church independent of the pope.

Although diminished in numbers, the Huguenots were not less a source of alarm and disquietude to the queen. The death of Henry had naturally filled them with fear, which all the protestations of the regent did not suffice to appease. The Duke de Bouillon, from his rank and fortune of great influence with his co-religionists, far from seeking to quiet, encouraged their mistrust, and stirred their zealots not only to demand a general assembly, but to seek to gain the fresh security they required, by terrifying rather than supplicating the queen. The Duc de Sully, on the other hand, as long as he held his high office and influence, counteracted these violent counsels ; and, with Duplessis-Mornay, sought to act the moderator. But the revolution at the commencement of 1611, which flung Sully into disgrace, and brought Bouillon back to court, changed the views and tendencies of the magnates. Sully, or at least his son-in-law, the Duc de Rohan, animated the ardent Huguenots, whilst De Bouillon undertook, in return for the queen's favour, to appease them and remove all difficulties. The assembly which met at Saumur in 1611 was thus agitated by the factions of its grandees, rather than guided by the honest aim of safeguarding and advancing their interests. De Bouillon looked to be supreme at Saumur, and to have been rewarded for his safe management by the transfer of the government of Poitou from Sully to himself. He was defeated in his attempts to acquire influence over the assembly, the attitude of which filled the queen with alarm too great to allow her to exercise any further vengeance upon Sully. She, however, refused to accede to the demands of the Huguenot assembly, or even give them an answer till they should

* Mémoires de Rohan, De Richelieu, Correspondence of Duplessis-Mornay, t. xi., and Fontenay-Mareuil.

CHAP. XXVIII.

consent to elect the deputies which were to reside at her court, and then immediately separate. By dint of persuasion, corruption and intrigue, Bouillon at last succeeded in getting the assembly to acquiesce, and it was thus broken up without attaining any of its desires: the court, at De Bouillon's suggestion, laid a plot for depriving De Rohan of the government of St. Jean D'Angely, one of the principal fortresses of *surety*. De Rohan indignant, hurried thither, defeated the design, summoned the deputies of Xaintonge and the surrounding *cercles* or a district to meet at La Rochelle in 1612. The Rochellois drove away with ignominy, a commissary whom the court sent thither, and the assembly proceeded to vote a *union*, and enter upon strong and menacing resolves. The regent immediately took the alarm. She foresaw an uprising of the Reformers, similar to that which Condé and Coligny had led, and she precipitately granted to the threats from La Rochelle, all that she had refused to the supplications from Saumur.*

The envoys whom the regent had sent to the court of Spain, sped well in their mission. The Duke of Lerma, as well as his sovereign Philip the Third, were moderate in their views and politics.† They pardoned the Duke of Savoy and consented to the French marriages. Louis the Thirteenth engaged to espouse the Infanta Anne of Austria, and Prince Philip of Spain Madame, as the eldest daughter of the late king was called. The regent allowed the Moors of Valencia, who had leagued to aid Henry the Fourth, and whom the Spanish government expelled to the number of many thousands, to traverse the Pyrenees and embark from French ports for Africa.‡ An offensive and defensive alliance completed the treaties of marriage, which were concluded

* Correspondence of Duplessis-Mornay, t. xi. Mém. de Rohan.

† Ranke's Spanish Monarchy.

‡ Fontenay-Mareuil.

in the spring of 1612 and celebrated by the brilliant *carrousel* in the Place Royale, of which Marshal Bassompierre has left the description.

The regent and the country had soon the opportunity of appreciating all they had lost by the abandonment of Henry's independent attitude, and the acceptance of the Spanish alliance. The English court manifested ill humour, and protested, notwithstanding an embassy which De Bouillon undertook to propitiate it.* The Duke of Savoy, baulked of his desire to possess the Milanese, revived his project of seizing Geneva, and later proceeded to appropriate the Montserrat—part of the succession of the Gonzaga's, Dukes of Mantua, old allies of France. There appeared no mode of preventing it but by reassembling the army of Dauphiné under Lesdiguières. When this was collected and menaced the Alps, Spain, in order to preclude the necessity of its marching, compelled the Duke of Savoy to yield, at least for the time.

Notwithstanding the marriage treaties and solemnities, the parties were too young to be brought together; and an interval and opportunity seemed thus left to the efforts of those inimical to the queen-mother, and to her policy. In spite of the weakness of that princess, and the extravagant folly of her Florentine favourites, the jealous grandees were quieted by the abundance of money still at the royal command, and by the united influence and sagacity of the *barbons*, as the veteran statesmen Sillery, Villeroy, and Jeannin were called. The two first, somewhat inclined to rivalry, cemented their interest by a marriage between the families. Death about this time dissolved the tie, and Concini, contriving to separate Sillery from his aged colleague, was enabled to get the better of all. The most remarkable of the three was Villeroy.

* MSS. Brienne, 34.

CHAP. XXVIII.

Richelieu has drawn his character with a master pen. Comparing him with De Thou, he describes the latter to have been as well versed in letters as Villeroy was ignorant of them; the one who depended on his learning being far inferior as a statesman to him who had but experience. "For knowledge," observes Richelieu, "is far different from action; and the speculative science of government has need of certain mental qualities which do not always accompany it: Villeroy, without any science, being as able, as De Thou was incapable, with all his studies."

The death of the Count of Soissons now devolved on the Prince of Condé the privileges of first prince of the blood, which seemed to involve the duty of being foremost in intrigue. He demanded the chief fortress of Bordeaux, his friends not being behind him in exigencies. That ready peace-maker, the treasury of the Bastille, was by this time nearly empty. And the queen being unable to satisfy their demands, the grandees all left the court in the spring of 1614. The Duke of Nevers, Condé, and Bouillon seized on Mezières, and sent a manifesto to the court complaining of the Spanish alliance, the influence of Italians, the discontent of Catholics as well as of Protestants, and the increase of taxation. To hoist at once the standard of popularity and produce the greatest embarrassment to the court, they demanded the convocation of the states-general.*

The regent fell instantly into mortal alarm; she dreaded no less to see a Coligny rise amongst the Huguenots than she feared to see a Guise and a new Ligue start up amongst the Catholics. Villeroy, against the opinion of Sillery, counselled courage, and advised the queen to march the guards and Swiss against Mezières, asserting that the suffering one affront surely begot

* Discours de ce qui s'est passé à Mezières. MSS. Colbert, 17.

another, and that in no case should the authority of government be so strenuously asserted as when the sceptre was held by a woman.* Concini, though lately created Marechal D'Ancre, would not hear of a recourse to arms, and in consequence De Thou was despatched to treat. As the malcontents hesitated, a show of raising forces was made, which induced them to accept the proffered terms. A treaty was concluded in May at St. Menehould. The states-general were to be convoked†, and until they met, the Prince of Condé was to be given Amboise as a *place de sureté*. Nevers was to have the government of Champagne. Large sums, which completely exhausted the deposit of the Bastille, were given to them as well as to Bouillon, Mayenne, and Longueville. The Duke de Vendôme withdrew to Britanny, refusing to be included in the treaty, and began to fortify Blavet in that province. The court moved south, mustering forces by the way; and the young king was received with such expressions of loyalty and adherence in every town, as to convey to his mind as well as the queen's, the certitude of what strength lay in the royal name. After holding the states of Britanny at Nantes, the court returned to Paris in the autumn.

Condé and his associates at St. Menehould had scarcely an intelligent reason for demanding the convocation of the states-general, which, if they could be found to entertain a common opinion, and exercise a united authority, must have proved more inimical to the grandees than to the crown. Marie de Medicis might have had some such idea as this; and her aged councillors might have prompted her to imitate her relative and predecessor, Catherine, in seeking to lean upon the commons against the arrogance and turbulence of the

* Villeroy's *avis*, MSS. Colbert, 17.

† Marie's letter, February, 1614. MSS. Bethune, 9140, and Conde's letter in reply.

CHAP. XXVIII.

nobility. If she had been baulked of such an aim in the past century, still less was it to be obtained in the present. Marie, however, did not meet the estates as regent. To inspire more reverence, and leave less opening for attack, she caused the king to declare himself of age in a solemn sitting of parliament. His youthful majesty took the opportunity of delegating all power to his mother as chief of his council. At the same time a proclamation was issued against the two phantoms that haunted the regent's fears, Huguenot and Catholic alliances and leagues. Both were forbidden, and the Edict of Nantes was declared to be maintained.

Convoked for the 14th of October, 1614, the estates met in the hall of the Augustin Convent* to the number of 361 members. There were 140 of the clergy, the greater part of whom were cardinals and prelates. More proud and less wise, the grandees had scorned to sit. But the great fact of the time and of the meeting was the disappearance of the commons. Of the 190 deputies of the *tiers*, there was scarcely one that could be called a burgess. Functionaries, magistrates, and judges were almost exclusively returned, being, in truth, the only notables that remained.† The citizen class disappeared or hid its head in obscurity. Such were the principal results of the failure of the Reformation in France. The religious movement was essentially a middle class and a civic one, and, with its failure, middle class and civism disappeared. In towns completely Huguenot this was, of course, not yet the case; such a fate was reserved for the days of their conquest. But at present the Huguenots had representative assemblies and interests of their own,

* Etats-Généraux.

† Richelieu, in one of his papers, says that commerce had decayed because the merchants had quitted it to fling themselves into places and become functionaries. He proposed remedying this by abolishing places, and according honour to merchants. Richelieu, Papiers d'Etats, tom. iii. p. 279.

which they took care not to mingle with assemblies where Catholics, prelates, and functionaries predominated.* But in purely Catholic towns which formed the great majority, and soon the universality of the kingdom, the functionary class had superseded that of the burgesses altogether, leaving no room for the industrious citizen. In time, indeed, all the offspring of the financial and magisterial placemen were unable to find offices, and were obliged to employ their wealth and their ambition in trade or independent pursuits, forming that discontented and exclusive *tiers ordre*, which a century and a half later was strong enough to thunder at the door of the splendid and exclusive edifice of state, reared by the crown and the privileged class for themselves, the passionate violence of their assault bringing down the whole building upon their heads.

When the orders met, it was to quarrel, first, about precedence and quality. The clergy sought to monopolise the conduct of the estates, and proposed a joint assembly; but this even the court opposed. The *tiers* represented the necessity of the three orders uniting to put a stop to the prodigality with which new offices were conferred and new taxes levied. The noblesse and the clergy had quite other views, and joined in demanding the abrogation of that hereditary right to their offices which the legists had acquired. This was called the Paulette, from the name of its inventor. By it the judges had obtained the power of transmitting their places, on payment of a certain part of the annual revenues to the state. Nobles and ecclesiastics were both jealous of a right which they did not possess themselves, and which constituted a third class in rivalry with them, monopolising wealth, as well as judicial rank and financial administration, like the equestrian order in the Roman republic. It was not

* Etats-Généraux, tom. 16, 17.

CHAP. XXVIII.

merely in the capital that this aristocracy of the robe had arisen and made itself felt. Legists had got possession of the places of baillis and seneschals, and were enabled to control the power and override the privileges of the local gentry. The noblesse now claimed these offices as their own, to be filled with persons of the *short robe*, by gentlemen, not legists, and, moreover, two seats in every parliament of France of the same rank and class. The loud cry of the upper chamber was, that all places should be reserved, and even a host of them created, for the scions of nobility, impoverished since war had ceased.

The *tiers*, or the functionary and magisterial class which composed it, had at first looked to support from the clergy against the arrogance and envy of the nobles. But the great number of prelates and ecclesiastical dignitaries, who represented the clergy, stifled whatever popular or independent sentiment might have existed in that body. They joined the nobles in demanding the abrogation of the Paulette, and represented the clergy as equally aggrieved with the nobles, by the encroachments of magistrates and lay functionaries. They complained that whereas they were formerly but a score, there were now 300 personages of the Paris parliament alone, who claimed, by the right of *Indult*, to appoint to ecclesiastical benefices. This interfered altogether with the patronage of the church, the magistrates rendering themselves judges in disputed cases of the kind, and deciding in their own interest. In matters of taxation the lay judges were equally hard on the clergy, making them pay the duty on salt and wine, notwithstanding their exemption from *aide* and *gabelle*. By the law of 1572 in times of famine and distress, the clergy, not alone but with the notabilities of towns, had been convoked to devise and provide means for succouring the necessitous. The judges had contrived to fling the whole burden of them now upon the church.

Thus assailed by the attack of the two hitherto exclusively privileged orders, the legists and functionaries of the *tiers*, replied to both. The complaint of the nobles they met by supplicating the crown to abolish pensions which the grandees received for doing nothing, and which amounted to fully as great a sum as that of the public salaries; to diminish the number of governors of provinces, marshals, and other useless dignities, enjoyed by the noblesse. To recall all grants of the royal domains, to limit the right of *corvée*, and of feudal exactions, and especially to make it law that all who entered into leagues, or levied troops without the order of his majesty, should be adjudged and punished as guilty of high treason.

To the clergy the commons dealt the severe blow of accusing them indirectly of the death of the late king, by their proclaiming that monarchs might be denounced and dethroned for purely spiritual crimes. And they proposed the passing of a solemn declaration, that no foreign potentate or pope had any power in the kingdom, over the person of its sovereign, or over the fidelity and obedience of his subjects, and that the doctrine, preached by so many ecclesiastics, that they had the power to depose kings or kill them was impious and execrable. Instead of accepting this proposition the clergy were arrogant enough to dispute it, and maintain the power of deposing monarchs and dispensing subjects from their fidelity. The language of Cardinal de Perron was as extravagant and pretentious as that of a prelate of the fifteenth century. But though the dispute was acrimoniously carried on by both sides, the regent succeeded in quieting it, by assuring the *tiers* that the king would consider their request, and that there was no necessity to insert it amongst their formal demands.

It was upon such idle and verbal disputes as these that even the Commons of France expended their

CHAP. XXVIII.

energies and time. In their quarrel for precedence and patronage with the noblesse, and for politico-religious dogma with the clergy, they forgot, or treated as an inferior consideration, the finances of the country.* A statement of these has been deferred to the present epoch of 1614, being the last meeting of the old representative assembly of the nation previous to 1789, and thus offering a fit opportunity of showing in what state the absolute monarchy of the Louises received the public revenue.

The principal support of the French revenue was the *taille* and its accessories, levied on the produce of the land, in the south directly, without distinction of persons, but in the north and centre on the cultivators of the soil exclusively. The amount of the taille would be difficult to state, as the greater portion of it, raised in the *Pays aux Etats*, that is, Burgundy, Dauphiné, Provence, Languedoc, and Britanny, were absorbed in the administrative and local expenses, and did not reach the treasury.†

Sully says, twenty millions of livres were raised by way of taille. He regularised the levy, cut down the expenses, did away with the extortion of the collectors, remitted twenty millions of arrears, and fixed the taille first at sixteen and in the last years of Henry's reign at fourteen millions. But either he did not take into consideration the local expenses of the northern and central provinces, or else these after the death of Henry, came to imitate the south, and pay their expenditure directly out of the revenue, for in the accounts of 1614 the whole taille yielded but seven and a quarter million of taxes to the *epargne*, or Paris treasury.‡

The indirect and multifarious taxes such as the salt

* Etats-Généraux and Relation de Rapine.

† Singular to say, in the Pays aux Etats, the Tiers were not called to vote the taxes.

‡ Traité du Revenu. Etats-Généraux, tom. xvii. p. 201. Forbonnais.

tax, the *aides* or consumption duties, the customs gave nine millions of net revenue; this with four millions coming from the domain, gave twenty millions for the court and central government, besides sixteen millions swallowed up in provincial expenditure. This income which had enabled Sully and Henry the Fourth to pay off a debt of an hundred millions, and to lay by some seventeen millions of crowns in the Bastille, did not suffice for the prodigal government of Marie de Medicis, who in four years had spent almost all the fruits of Sully's economy, and was obliged to ask of the estates to raise the king's revenue to the amount of his probable expenditure.

Voluminous as were the *cahiers* or supplications of the several orders—that of the clergy fills a volume—the finances occupied a small portion even of that of the *tiers*. Far from meeting the queen's recommendations for raising money, they besought diminution of the *taille*, and the withdrawal of the host of bursal edicts in progress. They at the same time prayed for the stoppage of pensions and the suspension of grants, to which request the favourite, D'Ancre, paid very marked contempt. One of the demands of the commons, worthy of being noted, was that all custom houses between province and province should be removed, and such taxes only levied on the frontier. The final *cahiers* or supplications of the several orders were presented to the king on the 23rd of February, 1615.

The most remarkable circumstance connected with the ceremony was, that the spokesman of the clergy on that occasion was a young prelate, Armand Duplessis de Richelieu, Bishop of Luçon. He was the grandson of that Richelieu who had the command of the king's guard in the time of the first Guise, and who was called Le Moine, the monk, from derision, having been one, and making his life a contrast to a monk's humility. He was not only famed for his licentiousness, but his

CHAP. XXVIII.

cruelty, which he practised to every excess on the Huguenots of the Loire. He became rich, however, and was the founder of his family—the bishopric of Luçon being almost ever since his death held by a younger member of it. An elder brother having resigned it and become a monk in 1605, Armand, though but twenty-two years of age, besought Henry the Fourth to procure it for him. This he accomplished through the Cardinal Du Perron, though Richelieu was obliged to go to Rome in the course of his suit. In his letters he represents Luçon as the most villanous and dirty bishopric of France. Yet, scant as were its revenues, we find him expending five or six hundred crowns to purchase two dozen of silver plates. He paid constant visits to Paris; preached frequently before the court, and commanded its attention for the space of an hour on the present occasion as orator of the clergy.*

In his harangue the Bishop of Luçon went the whole length for his order, which, he said, had far better claim to occupy political place than laymen. He attacked the magistrature, and demanded that their hereditary right to office by purchase should be abolished, because it wronged the church and the noblesse, the latter being obliged to prey upon ecclesiastical property and benefices, all other means of livelihood being closed to them. The promulgation of the Council of Trent as valid in France, and the completion of the Spanish marriages, as the seal of Catholicism, were the chief points upon which Richelieu insisted. The queen in her reply to the states, promised to curtail pensions, and abolish the hereditary right of the magistrates. But as the former would have provoked princely enmity, and the latter swept away a source of revenue, both were soon forgotten.

One of the effects of the right of the judges of parlia-

* Letters and Papers of Richelieu, edited by Avenel.

ment to transmit or vend their offices, was to advance young men to their posts, who, rich and independent, assumed the aristocratic ideas of a young noblesse. The Prince of Condé, who had failed to make any use of the estates, or to win influence among its members, fell back upon the parliament, and made partisans amongst its younger members, especially of one judge named Le Jay. He proposed that the parliament should assume those duties which the estates had abdicated, of discussing and framing propositions "for the king's service, the advantage of his subjects, and the good of the state." This revival of the pretensions of the parliament of the *Ligue*, and anticipation of the resistance of the Fronde, considerably but needlessly alarmed the court. The opposition contemplated, required some right in such claims, a patent object and a puissant support. The Paris parliament was without any. Hostilely viewed by noblesse and clergy, and with no hold upon the people, even the young king had but to command and speak menacingly in order to compel the judicial body to submit.

The Prince of Condé and his brother malcontents, De Bouillon and Nevers, wanting that support which the Guises had found in the capital, repaired to their strongholds, raised troops, and prepared for resistance. The queen mother mustered an army also, but more to keep them at bay than to reduce them: contented with which, Marie de Medicis proceeded southward and accomplished the exchange of her eldest daughter for the infanta. This decisive attainment of the great aim of the queen's policy and administration—for it was her own will which chiefly effected it—together with the ultra-Catholic demands of the clergy and nobles of the estates, alarmed and exasperated the Huguenots to the utmost. When the Prince of Condé crossed the Loire and offered himself as their leader, supported as he was by many of the grandees, they

CHAP. XXVIII.

rose at his call: the prince and the Huguenots signing an agreement to prevent the Spanish marriages, repudiate the council of Trent, procure the reform of the king's council, and the satisfaction of Huguenot demands,—neither party to treat or make terms without the other.* As the king returned northward with his Spanish bride, he found Condé at the head of a force equal to his own, that force principally composed of the armed and angry Huguenots. This display of hostility to a young king who had just ascended the throne, and on the occasion of his marriage, when subjects generally bring homage and congratulation, was an unfortunate event, placing the monarch and the Huguenot body in a state of antagonism, which could not be endured, and which must end in the humiliation of one or the other. The Duc de Rohan, however, as well as Condé, implicated the Huguenots to this extremity, and the assembly at Nismes assumed the character of little less than a hostile parliament. Instead of meeting such formidable resistance in arms, the king was obliged by the queen and her Italian favourites to negotiate with the religious and political malcontents.

However formidable in appearance, a league in such ill accordance as that between the Catholic grandees and the Huguenots was easily dissolved. The aim of the latter was to break the Spanish marriages, and check the ultra-Catholic policy of the court, whilst Condé and Bouillon sought to destroy Epernon's present influence with the queen, and monopolise government authority for themselves. When Marie, therefore, made ample offers to Condé, the Huguenots were at once abandoned by him with all the fickleness of his family. The Conference took place at Loudun, the Huguenot assembly transferring itself from Nismes to La Rochelle, in order

* Mémoires de Rohan.

to be near. Edmonds, the English envoy, and the Duke of Nevers acted as mediators. Condé obtained a million and a half of livres, the government of Berry, and the castle of Chinon. The Duc de Longueville had Amiens and the government of Picardy, which the Maréchal d'Ancre resigned for those of Normandy and Caen.* Six millions of livres were to be distributed amongst the grandees. Condé, to save appearances, insisted on the concession of the first demand of the late *tiers état*, respecting the powers of the church—that the parliament should be also satisfied, the circumstance of the late king's death inquired into (a threat to Epernon), pensions continued, the edict of pacification observed, and the decrees of Trent set aside. In addition to these public demands, Condé required that he should be chief of the council, and sign all the orders that it issued. This seemed to the queen no less than a seizure of the government, but Villeroy observed that if the prince did not attend the council his privilege was null, and that if he did his person was in the queen's power, so that, though he might hold the pen, her Majesty could control the arm. Condé was fully satisfied with this apparent concession; and when the Huguenots and others subsequently interposed difficulties, he cut these short by signing the articles of agreement (May 3, 1616), leaving all others to follow his example or continue the war. In these negotiations and decisions, Marie de Medicis and her favourite no doubt made use of the counsels of Richelieu, who was then her *secrétaire des commandemens*, as well as almoner to the young Queen Anne. Concini favoured his advancement, and even originated it, being determined to get rid of the *barbons*, Sillery, Jeannin, and Villeroy, who interfered with his authority, and who, as the king now approached the age of reason and independence, might venture to address and influence him.

* Mémoires de Pontchartrain.

CHAP. XXVII

Concini all along displayed jealousy and mistrust of the young monarch, who showed him coldness at the same time with submission. Louis was fond of the chase, and would gladly have visited the different residences of the crown, or shown himself at the head of armies. But the Maréchal d'Ancre dreaded lest he should fall in with persons who would give him froward advice, or find himself in positions that might suggest independence. He therefore kept Louis almost altogether confined to the Louvre and Tuileries, and to the gardens between them, where he indulged in puerile occupations, making conduits, beating drums, erecting and demolishing puny fortifications. The queen mother was a party to this reclusion, and Louis sighed for his deliverance.

One of the young monarch's most dominant tastes was falconry, and as he was not allowed to follow it in the fields, he kept a number of these birds of prey in his apartments. A young man, of the name of Luynes, charged with the care of them, interested the king by his knowledge and conversation on such subjects. He soon became a favourite. And Marie de Medicis, who discovered the rising sun, made repeated offers to resign her authority, which Louis was not prepared to accept. She then sought to conciliate De Luynes, but he, ambitious and desirous of full power, held aloof, and continued in the king's presence to criticise the feeble administration of Marie and the prodigal folly of Concini.

The queen had recourse, in consequence, to Condé; and when he did not immediately repair to court, after the treaty of Loudun, sent Richelieu to induce him to do so. The bishop succeeded in bending the prince to his views, but was not so successful in a subsequent mission to the Dukes of Bouillon and Mayenne. They had conceived a different project. For whilst the Prince of Condé was willing to ally with the Maréchal

d'Ancre, and make use of his influence, the dukes and most of the grandees had come to the conclusion that the only way to get the better of Concini's influence and malignity was to slay him. The maréchal had himself set the example of violence, causing an officer, named Riberpré, to be attacked and killed in open day in the streets of Paris. He subsequently made a similar attempt on a citizen of the burgess guard, named Picard, whom he caused to be beaten nearly to death by his valets, for daring to stop his carriage as he entered Paris. The mob, which detested D'Ancre and Italians, rose in defence of Picard, seized the valets and had them hanged, whilst Concini, so far from being able to protect them, was obliged on the occasion to take flight himself. (June, 1616.)

In the month of July the Prince of Condé came to Paris, and found the plot of his brother grandees for the destruction of D'Ancre too much advanced and too firmly resolved for him to do more than delay and adjourn it. The court and the queen employed every means to conciliate the prince. He not only signed the decrees of the council, but appeared to be supreme at its sittings, and when the grandees insisted on a reformation of the same council, the prince declared that the queen had done everything to satisfy them. They did not agree in this opinion, and Condé, who could not separate his cause from theirs without being isolated, was obliged to chime in with their discontent, and to countenance their hatred of Concini. Condé was then so influential in court and at council, as well as over the malcontent grandees, that he seemed master of the monarchy, his palace being continually crowded with guests or suitors, whilst the Louvre was left comparatively deserted. Lord Hay, coming as English ambassador at the time, Condé fêted him to the utmost. Concini himself coming on one of these occasions to visit the prince, the assembled grandees were with difficulty

CHAP. XXVIII.

prevented by the latter from seizing so favourable an opportunity to immolate the maréchal. Condé would not allow him to be attacked in his palace, and subsequently warned him to quit the capital, as he could no longer ensure his safety.

In Condé's mind the ideas and wishes of his brother nobles soon overcame his adhesion and gratitude to the queen and Concini. He suffered proposals in his presence for getting rid of both, nay, he was said to have used and approved an expression, that of *Barre à bas**, which implied a design of taking the young king's place, and becoming a competitor for his throne. The queen soon had proofs of their real intentions. The old movements of the League seemed renewed in Paris; the mob was excited against Concini, the burgess guard and the parliament provoked to rebel. The Duc de Longueville at the same time seized the fortress of Peronne, held by Concini. Condé assumed more and more the airs of a superior. "He is quite a king," observed Marie, "but we'll soon prove he is only king of the bean."

Sully, amongst others, came to warn the king that he was in danger. "What would you have me do?" exclaimed Marie. "You would be safer in the country at the head of 1200 horse, than in the Louvre," said the veteran, repeating the words of Catherine de Medicis to Henry the Third. But Louis the Thirteenth had the very regiments which his father had formed, of which the officers were attached to his person, whilst Condé wanted altogether that hold, which fanaticism gave Guise, over the people, the parliament, and the gentry. The queen determined to arrest the prince, and as many of the grandees as she could seize with him, in the Louvre. Her timidity made her lose the first opportunity that offered. So that at last Themines, to whom she gave the order, was able only to arrest the prince.

* Removing the bar from his scutcheon, which alone distinguished it from that of the king.

This act of vigour defeated the cabal, and the populace, after some clamour and threatening, subsided into expectancy.

The Dukes of Nevers, of Bouillon, of Vendôme, all those who had filled the Hotel de Condé with outbursts and menaces against the queen and Concini, repaired to Soissons, gathered troops and sent forth manifestoes. The queen, however, was in command of a much more formidable army, and had succeeded in winning the Duke of Guise and the family of Lorraine. The Count d'Auvergne, illegitimate son of Charles, so long a prisoner in the Bastille was released, whilst Condé was committed to it. This gave the court the support of a prince of the blood. He and Guise proceeded to lay siege to the grandees in Soissons. The new chancellor, Du Vair, being found too much in dread of, or in favour with, the malcontents, secretary Barbin was promoted to his place, and the secretaryship of state filled by Richelieu (Nov. 30, 1616). From this moment the queen commanded at least the service of a powerful pen, which defended her both before the French people and foreign powers with unwonted superiority.* She was as well served by the soldiers as by the secretary she had chosen. All the princes' strongholds in Berry were reduced, and the rebellious grandees besieged in Soissons, where they must soon have submitted, had they not received secret assurances from the king and De Luynes through the Cardinal of Guise. D'Ancre, who suspected these relations and the channel through which they were carried, meditated summoning to Paris Themines, who had arrested Condé, to do the same by the Cardinal of Guise.† Louis and De Luynes feared that D'Ancre's

* The "Declaration," answering the Prince, and the instructions to Schomberg. The latter document is remarkable for the energy with which Richelieu repudiates the accusation of Condé's partisans, that the queen and he were Spanish in their policy. The secretary insisted that they followed the old policy of Henry the Fourth.

† Mémoires d'Estrées.

CHAP. XXVIII.

next act would be to seize the latter in order to slay or exile him. They therefore plotted to anticipate the blow by arresting D'Ancre; but whom should they entrust with such a task? They were in an understanding with the Guises, but the duke, though hating D'Ancre, was still attached to the queen mother. Shunning the great, therefore, they opened their minds to three or four subordinates. These recommended the Marquis de Vitry, son of the old Leaguer, and captain of the guard, as the fit agent. And Vitry was much astonished at the humble rank of those who made such a proposal to him. He, however, contrived to assure himself of the king's participation, and then undertook the office. Those threatened were not without a sense of their danger, and of the quarter whence it came. D'Ancre proposed sending away the whole of the king's guard to Soissons, so much did he suspect them, and was only dissuaded by Richelieu.* Two letters are extant, signed Richelieu, written in the king's name, during the month of March, peremptorily ordering Vitry to repair to the army. His disobedience must have been significant. Concini gave his enemies few opportunities. He was generally either in his government of Normandy or well guarded in his house in Paris. He was met, however, as he entered the Louvre on March 24, 1617, by Vitry and his armed followers, each with a pistol concealed beneath their cloaks. They had some difficulty in stemming the crowd of Concini's escort. But Vitry did so, and laid hold of the arm of the marshal, saying he was his prisoner. "Me!" exclaimed the victim, drawing back, when at the moment three pistol shots and several stabs left him a lifeless corpse.

The king was one of the first to hear the ominous sounds, which Ornano soon came to explain, saying Concini was dead. Louis, who had given orders for

* Mémoires de Richelieu, liv. ix.

his arrest, and for his death only in case of resistance, did not pause to inquire, but appeared at a window, and cried out, "*Grand mercy!* many thanks; I am now a king." The queen mother heard the report at the same time, and felt that her reign was over. "Her only crown," she said, "was that which she expected in heaven." The Maréchale d'Ancre, too, heard the fatal sound, and knew that a worse fate awaited her. She ineffectually tried to hide her jewels, which those who had spoiled her husband even of his cloak came to pillage in her apartment, and lead her off to prison. The crowd of courtiers, hitherto accustomed to pay their daily visit to the queen mother, now turned in another direction, and sought the king's apartments, who was too unwell to receive them. Luynes, however, carried him to a more spacious room, and, placing him on a billiard table, enabled Louis the Thirteenth for the first time to receive freely the homage of his subjects. Amongst others, Richelieu entered the apartments, and received, he himself says, no unfavourable reception, being bidden to go to the council.* Others assert the king's exclamation to have been, "Oh, bishop! you see we are delivered from your tyranny."

Whilst the slayers of D'Ancre were sharing the material spoil, and Luynes assuming his political power, the populace tore the body from the tomb in St. Germain l'Auxerrois, where it had been hastily deposited, dragged it through the streets, and hung it to a lamp-post on the bridge, after insulting the remains with every indignity. The poor little son of the victim, forgotten in the palace, and so wretched that he refused all food, was taken by a compassionate soldier, and brought to the young Queen Anne of

* Brienne has a story, apparently unworthy of trust, that Richelieu was warned of D'Ancre's murder, and said nothing. See Mémoires Richelieu, Pontchartrain, Fontenay-Mareuil, and Relation de la Mort d'Ancre.

CHAP. XXVIII.

Austria. It sufficiently paints her character to mention that she asked the child to dance for her, which he did, in the hopes of exciting compassion and obtaining favour. It was mooted by the conspirators whether they should kill, imprison, or exile Marie de Medicis.* She was at last informed that she must retire to Blois. A farewell meeting was arranged between her and Louis, the words fixed beforehand by the careful Luynes what each should say. Marie was to regret that her administration of the kingdom had not pleased her son. The latter was to be courteous but firm in his reply. The tears of the queen broke through the programme; and after the few empty words to Louis, she begged of De Luynes to spare her secretary Barbin. Even this was not conceded. And after Louis the Thirteenth had watched his mother's carriage and suite, amongst which was Richelieu, departing over the bridge, he made the first use of his liberty to order the court to proceed instantly to Vincennes.†

Notwithstanding the inexperience of De Luynes, the first acts of his government, guided by the veteran ministers Villeroy and Jeannin, whom he recalled to office, were marked by firmness and prudence. On the news of the death of D'Ancre, the grandees affected to regard their cause as won. They sent in their submission, and came severally to pay homage and respect, "each wanting," as Pontchartrain says, "to remain armed in his government at the public expense, as well as to have pensions and privileges increased." But the treasury was empty; and in order to pay the armies lately set on foot, the queen had been obliged to augment the *taille* and enforce

* Papiers d'Etat de Richelieu, vol. ii. p. 652.

† The English court indecorously joined in the congratulations for Concini's death, "who was more than half Spanish," writes Chamberlain. Edmonds was ordered to tell Vitry that he had a happy hand. Hardwick Papers.

other taxes, to the dangerous increase of popular discontent. And instead of having fresh gratuities and places to bestow upon the grandees, Luynes felt the necessity of curtailing their pensions and their powers. He kept Condé in the Bastille, allowing the princess to share his confinement. And in order to introduce what he called reform, and apply a check to the power of the grandees, an assembly of notables was summoned to meet in the autumn at Rouen. CHAP. XXVIII.

A feeble monarch like Louis the Thirteenth might have been expected to be a merciful one; but it was his fortune always to be dominated by cruel persons. De Luynes showed himself needlessly so. The widow of D'Ancre had surely been sufficiently punished by the death of her husband and the confiscation of her property. De Luynes thirsted after her blood, and caused her to be accused before the parliament of a host of crimes, treason, peculation, sorcery. What was the nature of the charm she had thrown over the queen, was asked. "The influence, merely," was her reply, "which a strong mind has over a weak one." The parliament showed reluctance to be made the instrument of Luynes's revenge. But when Vitry, D'Ancre's assassin, had taken his seat on one of its benches, that body could scarcely pretend to preserve the semblance of legal justice. Eleanor Galigai acted, both on her trial and at her execution, equal to the character she claimed in the reply above recorded. She answered the accusations of her enemies and the rage of her executioner with equal calmness. Even the rabid hate of the Parisian mob was stayed, and changed into compassion at her attitude and aspect.

The notables who assembled at Rouen in the first days of December, 1617, consisted of thirteen prelates, eleven nobles of names little known, save those of D'Andelot and Duplessis-Mornay, and twenty-four

CHAP. XXVIII.

judges or *procureurs* of different parliaments.* The first subject upon which the king demanded their advice was the composition of the council. The path of free and representative government had been now definitively forsaken. The estates had proved a cumbrous and idle piece of political machinery. As the several constitutions of Spain had been compelled to give way to the absolute will of the monarch, France, whose fate or nature it has been to imitate rather than originate in these matters, found the example worthy of being followed. Spain was then the foremost of European countries; England, under the Stuarts, worthy of little consideration or respect. The word "cortes" having been abolished from the Spanish vocabulary, the estates were equally superannuated in France. And as the Philips governed their dominions by a council of state and a number of subsidiary councils, France adopted a similar system. It was but one of the results of that Hispanifying process, which France had undergone from the triumph of Catholicism and the weakness of Henry the Fourth.

The council of state was the crowning institution of a political system, in which the functionary class predominated. So it was in Spain, where noblesse and clergy were subjected to it by the House of Austria. In France the same tendency prevailed of functionarism establishing itself on the necks of all other classes in the name of the king. It has been seen how legists and placemen dominated in the estates of 1614, superseding the commons altogether, and thrusting, in a great measure, both nobles and clergy aside. The crown now proceeded in the same track; and not only did the legists predominate in the assembly of the notables at Rouen, but, as Richelieu informs us, they actually claimed precedency over the noblesse, and obtained it. When the king complained to such

* Etats-Généraux, tom. xviii.

an assembly of the number of grandees in his council, rendering secrecy impossible and quiet discussion vain, it of course responded to his wish, that the appointment to a seat in that body depended altogether upon the royal will.

Marie of Medicis had revived the old system, employed by her relative Catherine, of having a secret or cabinet council, in which all important resolutions were taken. But Concini, especially since he had dismissed Villeroy and Jeannin, had concentrated this council in his person, with Richelieu for his secretary. Luynes durst not continue a course so unpopular. He proposed, however, attaining the same end indirectly, by adopting the Spanish plan, which, indeed, Henry the Fourth had partly introduced, of the council separating into several smaller bodies, one of which took cognisance of *affaires* or despatches, another, called the *conseil privé*, gave judgment in trials, a third composed a council of finances. Richelieu, it may here be anticipated, crowned the edifice of despotism by establishing the *conseil d'en haut*, in which the prime minister completely dominated. But he at the same time preserved the council of state, which remains to this day the distinguishing characteristic of the French system of government, being a functionary parliament and tribunal, for the preparation and concoction of ordonnances, the consideration of reforms, the discussion and distribution of taxes, and finally the tribunal to which all functionaries are amenable. What an English parliament is to the people, the *conseil d'état* was and is to the sole class in France that is considered worth a permanent place in the legislature, the class of functionaries. And this functionary parliament has outlived all of the three estates. It still flourishes and administers, whilst clergy, nobles, and commons lie prostrate in the dust.

The notables not only gave their sanction to this

CHAP. XXVIII

great institution for depriving the nobles of political power, but also recommended alleviation of financial burdens, by diminishing the amount of the pensions paid to the grandees and nobles, from six millions to three, and by reducing the armed force and its expenditure to what both were in the last years of Henry the Fourth. Were it not for the attraction which the majesty of a young king had for the noblesse, and the enormous prestige which had accrued to the royal character, the aristocracy would have answered the proposals of Luynes and the recommendation of his notables by instant rebellion.

There was no demand which the prelates, the Pope, or the clergy in their synods made with so much urgency as the restoration of church property in Bearn. The third article of the edict of Nantes provided for such restoration. But Bearn was a separate principality, whose estates had sanctioned the transference of church property to the Protestants. Henry himself shrank from rescinding that transfer, but he paved the way for it by appointing bishops, sending Jesuits, and getting up a Catholic party and congregation. It was necessary to pay these bishops out of the royal treasury, a necessity which the government sought to obviate by restoring to them the church property, and paying the Protestant pastors their much more modest salaries. Marie of Medicis hesitated flinging such a provocation to the Huguenots as the depriving them of the church property in Bearn. No sooner were the ex-councillors Jeannin, Villeroy, and the chancellor Du Vair restored to their places after the death of D'Ancre, than they decided on gratifying the ultra-Catholic party by a restoration of their property. Du Vair was the most zealous for the measure, hoping, says De Rohan, to win thereby a cardinal's hat.*

* Sir W. Beecher wrote to King James, that Luynes, distrusting his own judgment, chiefly relied on the advice of Deagant, the chancellor, and the Garde des Sceaux. Cabbala, p. 118.

This, no doubt, was the origin of the religious war which ensued, the Huguenots looking upon it as the commencement of the abolition of their rights, whilst the young king considered their resistance as an insult and an outrage to his authority. Louis the Thirteenth has been depicted, not without some truth, as a weak prince, readily abandoning the conduct of affairs to his minister or his favourite. He was so no doubt. But it was not a complete abandonment. Even in the depths of his shrinking and reserved nature, Louis had a strong feeling both of patriotism and pride, and on points affecting these, ministers and favourites knew they must not offend him. The satisfaction of the Catholic religion and prelates in the affair of Bearn was one of those points in which the king felt an interest and expressed determination. Young as Louis was, and weak as he might seem, he had a will in this respect to which Luynes and all others were obliged to conform.*

The progress of this religious quarrel was, however, interrupted by the more serious circumstance of the queen mother's defying the government of her son. For some time Marie had borne her confinement with impatience, aggravated as it was by fresh indignities, by *espionnage*, by the exile of those attached to her (Richelieu had been sent off to Avignon), and the non-payment of her stipulated allowance. The Dukes of Epernon and Rohan, and even Luynes's father-in-law, the Duc de Montbazon, interested themselves for

* The Duc de la Force says that Luynes pressed the obnoxious measure of spoliating the church of Bearn, in order to drive from court young Montpouillat, La Force's son, who enjoyed much of the king's favour. The Duc de Rohan accuses La Force of not opposing, and cutting short the attempt peremptorily, instead of temporising with, and so encouraging it. But the king's own opinions, fortified by the influence of his confessor, were no doubt the chief promovents of the measure. Henry the Fourth took no care that his son should be educated in principles of tolerance; he abandoned his fortunes and kingdom to all the bigotry which he himself had shaken off.

CHAP. XXVIII.

her, and encouraged her in the design to break from bondage, and repair to the king's presence to seek justice and protection. Barbin, her former minister, was the agent in Paris, in whose hands all these efforts concentrated. A communication of his to the queen was intercepted, revealing the connivance of the governor of the Bastille, and the existence of a formidable plot.* Luynes caused Barbin to be seized and prosecuted before the Great Council. The judges seeing it was the queen mother who was arraigned in his person showed every inclination to acquit or lightly punish him. But Luynes insisted and menaced with such earnestness that, but for the fainting of a judge in court, the accused would have been capitally condemned. This alone saved his life, but he was sent into exile. Increased severity was also used towards the queen, who became completely a prisoner in the castle of Blois. She, therefore, did not hesitate to meditate her escape, which she effected with great risk, letting herself down from the high iron gallery which surrounds the château to the ground. She reached Loches in safety, and was received by the Duke of Epernon in Angoulême. (February, 1619.)

De Luynes was in great alarm at the first intelligence, till calmed by the assurance of the chancellor and Jeannin that the queen could not have got together any important party in her favour. This was true. The Duc de Bouillon now refused his participation. Montmorency, on whom Marie counted, was equally lukewarm. And the Huguenots, with La Force, to whom she appealed, merely took advantage of the offer to make their peace with the court, and get the edicts that were obnoxious to them suspended. The government, too, was able to raise abundant forces, and to set an army on foot of 36,000 foot and 6000

* Mémoires de Deagant, p. 122.

horse. These had but to be led vigorously in order to crush Epernon. It was feared, however, that Marie de Medicis might escape to Brouage, and from thence by sea. Besides, the religious party, the Cardinal de la Rochefoucauld, the Père Arnaud, and the Capucin Friar Joseph, dissuaded violence. The Pope extended his protection over the Florentine queen regent, who had turned French policy in his favour; and the king and his favourite were assured that if they allowed Richelieu to return to the queen mother, he would soften her resentment and bring about a reconciliation. Richelieu in exile at Avignon had assumed a contrite and conciliating attitude, and continued to win good opinions from all parties.* The Bishop of Luçon was accordingly allowed to repair to Angoulême, where he soon displaced the fiery Epernon and the mad Rucellai in their ascendency over the queen. Exerting at the same time his influence with the ecclesiastics at court, he brought about an accord by which the queen was to have the government of Anjou, with the castle of Angers, and the fortresses of Pont du Cé and Chinon. Richelieu, who accomplished this, was made to pay a severe penalty. He gave the command of the castle of Angers to his brother, the Marquis de Richelieu, which so mortified the Marquis de Themines, who had a promise of the command, that a duel ensued, in which Richelieu was slain.†

A few months later, the court of Louis the Thirteenth and that of his mother met together with apparent reconciliation, but real mistrust. De Luynes, to counterbalance the number of the noblesse who gradually rallied to their court at Angers, liberated the Prince of Condé from the Bastille (October, 1619), and announced at the same time, greatly to the annoyance of the queen mother, that the charges against him had

* Richelieu Papiers d'Etat.

† Mémoires et Correspondence de Richelieu. Fontenay-Mareuil.

CHAP. XXVIII.

been frivolous.* With the prince's countenance, he caused himself and his two brothers to be created dukes, with the possession of such fortresses and governments as a command of the royal treasury allowed them to purchase.

Such united encroachments raised against De Luynes all the obloquy that had assailed Concini. In the days of Marie's regency there was abundance of money to content the grandees without putting fresh burdens on the people. Now there was little left, and the treasury, exhausted by the prodigality of the favourite, could not pay the usual pensions. Even Marie de Medicis did not receive the sums stipulated by the late agreement. So that in 1620 there was a general outburst of the grandees, who rallied more or less openly around the queen. And when De Luynes, in order to pay troops to oppose them, was obliged to go to parliament to register edicts for new taxes, he was assailed by the remonstrances of the legists, as well as by the clamour of the people. To this were joined the cries of the Huguenots, to whom the promises of the court had been as little observed.†

The malcontents promised to muster at Angers, and defend the queen mother in that stronghold. But the days were past when the refractory noble had but to summon his retainers and at once take the field. They now required time and money to raise an efficient force, whilst the king had his guard, his Swiss, and several provincial regiments, always at command. When Louis, therefore, with Luynes and Condé, marched at once into Normandy, they met with no resistance, occupying both Rouen and Caen without a blow. As they ad-

* Condé afterwards alleged, that one of the conditions imposed upon him at the time of his liberation, was a promise to serve against the Huguenots. Letter of Kensington to Conway, May 16, 1624. S. P. O.

† The Mercure Français for 1619 and 1620.

vanced southward every town submitted; the partisans of the queen not defending even La Fléche. The Duke of Mayenne, on whom she chiefly relied, had mustered an army indeed, but was slow to arrive. In order to allow time and means for this, it was necessary to hold Pont du Cé, a town in an island on the Loire, with a flying bridge to either shore. The young commander, the Count de Soissons, with the Duc de Vendôme, attempted to throw up a trench extending from Angers to Pont du Cé, two leagues distant, a labour useless for defence.

The queen mother and Richelieu had another source of confidence. Luynes was averse to hostilities. But the young king took delight in the bustle of a camp, displayed a spirit and tenacity which baffled the favourite, and showed open preference for the counsels of the Prince of Condé, who, for this very reason, as well as from vindictiveness against the queen mother, urged the war. The royal army pressed on from La Fléche till it menaced the communications between Angers and Pont du Cé. Negotiations had been going on, and De Luynes sent offers of the old terms to the queen in Angers. Marie of Medicis was fond of her morning repose, and on this occasion none dared to disturb her; whilst the king in his ardour ordered the Marquis de Crequi to beat up the enemy's quarters in Pont du Cé. He did not purpose making more than a *reconnaissance*, but the young troops, seeing that the Count de Retz, on the queen's side, had withdrawn the cavalry, charged the force opposed to them, routed them, and passed the movable bridge along with the flying enemy. Pont du Cé was thus carried, all hope of reinforcements from the south cut off, and the queen mother at the victor's mercy. De Luynes did not take advantage of his triumph to be harsh; and the queen obtained the conditions of the former treaty, "having consumed two millions of livres in eight days to no

CHAP. XXVIII.

purpose." The queen stipulated for the pardon of her associates, which was granted, those who had been in arms against Louis repairing to his presence at Poitiers, on the 9th of September, 1620, where they were well received. The Duke of Mayenne was of the number.*

De Luynes now hoped the war was over. A solemn review of the army was held on the 10th, on the plains of Lusignan, near Poitiers, and the soldiers were enjoined to depart to their homes.† With nine regiments, however, the king, after an interview with his mother, proceeded to Bordeaux, secured the Dukes of Epernon and La Force, who came to pay their respects, and displaced the governor of Blaye, which he gave to a brother of De Luynes. Louis did not partake of the pacific sentiments of his favourite, who longed to return to Paris, and who, lest any forwardness of the Huguenots should arise to interrupt it, sent La Force to Bearn to accommodate matters. But the monarch's ear was at the same time beset by his confessor and the prelates, supported by Condé, who pressed the reinforcement of the army, and its march to the Pyrenees for the complete reduction of Bearn.

The Protestants, indeed, were too much excited and alarmed to be humble or conciliating. They were too well informed as to what was taking place in Germany, where a successor of the House of Austria, a genuine relative of Philip the Second, had arisen to revive the Spanish policy of persecution. Ferdinand the Second found Styria as completely Protestant as Bearn; by persecution, confiscation, and the sword he had made it Catholic. The Bohemians having in consequence rejected him as king, and chosen the Elector Palatine in his stead, the war between tolerance and persecution had been kindled in Germany.

That the sympathies of the French Court were with

* Assemblée et Declarations de Princes en Poitiers (print).

† Congé général (printed.)

CHAP. XXVIII.

Catholic intolerance in Germany there was little doubt. The act by which Louis the Thirteenth restored the ecclesiastical property in Bearn was identical with the first act of Ferdinand the Second. A solemn embassy, too, had arrived in Paris from Ferdinand, in 1619, representing Calvinism as not merely a heresy against God, but a rebellion against monarchy.* The mission gave rise to much diversity of opinion. How much so ever the policy of Henry the Fourth had been abandoned, to fly absolutely against it, and aid the House of Austria to conquer Germany, seemed monstrous even to those who were hyper-Catholic in domestic policy. So that for that year the affair remained in suspense. De Luynes, however, had a special reason for conciliating Spain. His brothers sought the hands of two of the richest heiresses in Europe, Mesdemoiselles De Pecquigny and De Luxemburg. Both were under Spanish protection, and Luynes declared his readiness to gratify the court of Brussels in aiding, as far as was possible, the empire in Germany. The Brularts, who were ministers under Luynes, undertook the task with pleasure, and the Duke d'Angoulême (formerly Count d'Auvergne) was sent to Germany with instructions artfully drawn up. Under the semblance of continuing French protection to the German Protestants, the envoy of Louis the Thirteenth, was to recommend and bring about peace between the Protestant and Catholic union, one of the chief conditions of which was that the Elector Palatine should resign his claim and hold of the kingdom of Bohemia. Since the English king does not approve of his granting that crown, say the French instructions, we cannot do so. An envoy being sent by Louis to the elector, the latter refused to receive one who would not recognise his kingly title. And the envoys succeeded in bringing about a peace between Protestants and Catholics,

* Account of the mission and its arguments, in the Mercure Français.

CHAP. XXVIII.

excluding him, and consequently exposing him unsupported to the overwhelming force which Austria and Bavaria led immediately against him.*

The obsequiousness of Luynes and the Brularts to the House of Austria and the Catholic cause in Germany, suggested to the Duke of Ferrara, the Spanish Viceroy of Milan, that it would be a favourable opportunity for driving the Germans from the Valteline, and securing thus the only passage for troops and ammunition between the Milanese and the Tyrol. A plot was laid, and the Catholics of the valley encouraged to rise and massacre the Protestants, who held political dominion over the valley. On the 19th of July, 1620, several hundreds of Protestants were sacrificed in the Valteline to the knives of the Catholics, when the Spaniards instantly marched to occupy the garrisons.† Even the French court was aroused by so atrocious an act, which menaced the Grisons, one of the cantons of Switzerland, most constantly its ally, and Bassompierre was sent to Madrid to protest. Reaching the capital about the time of Philip the Third's demise and the interval which elapsed before the formation of a new government, he succeeded in concluding a treaty, by which Spain promised to repair the malice and injustice of its viceroy.‡

The events of Germany and Italy were but too well known to the French Huguenots, who considered themselves involved in the general reaction. Met in assembly at Loudun in September, 1619, they forwarded to the court seven special demands.§ One was the maintenance

* Négociations de Duc d'Angoulême. MS. Brienne. As a proof how completely the French government was in Austrian interests, one has but to consult Brulart's letter to the envoys, of July 24, in which he fears lest the recall of the French army from the frontier, to act against the queen mother, might indispose the emperor, as it had been especially sent thither to be useful to him and give weight to his cause.

† Mém. de Rohan. MSS. Dupuy, 400.

‡ For Bassompierre's Spanish negotiations, see the Mercure, as well as MSS. Dupuy, 402 and 454.

§ Mercure Français for 1619.

of their town of surety. Lectoure, a principal fortress, which protected Bearn, had been lost to them by the conversion of its governor, Fontrailles. They prayed its restoration, and the appointment of two Protestant judges in the parliament of Paris, as well as the reparation for the losses of the church in Bearn and elsewhere. The court, then menaced by the queen mother's pretensions, promised to grant the demands, and at the same time not to enforce the ecclesiastical confiscation of Bearn, till the question had been more fully examined.

When the king advanced to Bordeaux, after the reduction of Angers and Pont du Cé in September, 1620, none of these requests of the Huguenots had been complied with. Yet Luynes, notwithstanding all that he had done in Bearn and in Germany against the Protestants, was still anxious to adjourn, if not avoid war, and remove its causes. He therefore proposed to grant the chief demands of the Huguenots, except that of leaving them the ecclesiastical property in Bearn, which he could no longer concede. He sent the Duc de la Force to conclude an accommodation on these terms.* The duke exerted himself sincerely to obtain them of the estates of Bearn; and sending word that he had succeeded, De Luynes ordered the retreat of the army. Whether from learning their withdrawal or from natural reluctance, the estates declined at last to sanction the transference of the property to the Catholics. The news of their stubbornness came to overthrow all the pacific arrangements of De Luynes, and to enable Condé to drag the king at the head of his troops into Bearn. There were no means of resistance. Louis entered Pau on the 15th of October, and not only compelled the estates to submit to his edicts, but to transfer the Church revenues of Bearn to those of the rest of France. Navarreins, the chief fortress of

* Correspondance De la Force.

CHAP. XXVIII.

the principality, was seized and given to the command of a zealous Catholic. Louis the Thirteenth showed himself a Ferdinand the Second in Bearn.*

The Huguenots considered themselves to have been overreached, not conquered. They did not expect the invasion, and declared it treachery after the promises given. The Mayor of La Rochelle, immediately on learning the king's act in Bearn, summoned a general assembly of the Huguenots for the 26th of the following month. The king issued an edict to prohibit it. But the assembly met notwithstanding, and proceeded, not merely to petition or protest, but to organise resistance, levy armies, raise funds, and appoint commissioners.*

This was open rebellion, from which the most considerable of the Huguenot grandees shrank. Lesdiguières declined the command which his co-religionists offered him; De Bouillon shrank equally from the civil war. The Duke of Rohan and his brother Soubise, with De la Fère and Chatillon, alone remained firm—the two latter being by no means reduced to extremities; and Chatillon, though he now was preferred to Coligny, only accepted command in order to act without energy, and to betray, rather than to encourage or defend, the Huguenots.†

All the military ardour of the young king was aroused by the provocation of the Rochellois. He raised troops, ordered taxes, and prepared to lead his army in person, greatly to the delight of Condé and zealous prelates. De Luynes, who could not face the storm, was determined to ride and to lead it. And to give himself that authority, which he had found to fail him in the camp, he obtained his nomination to the high office of constable. One motive for his grasp-

* The acts and documents of the assembly of La Rochelle of 1620, are collected in MS. Brienne, 226. Its military organisation, or règlement général, concluded May 10th, 1621, in forty-seven articles, was printed.

† Huguenot denunciation of Chatillon in Synod of Nismes, 1621.

ing it, and for the Prince of Condé's supporting his demand, was the existence of a negotiation with Lesdiguières, which had been pending some time, the aim of which was to invest that veteran with the dignity of constable, in return for his adoption of Catholicism. Luynes defeated it, and adjourned the conversion and promotion of Lesdiguières, by taking the office himself.*

The royal army marched south in May, 1621, its first act to indicating even loyal Huguenots what they were to expect. Duplessis-Mornay was tricked out of his command of Saumur, of which the king took possession. St. Jean d'Angely was then invested, and the Duc de Soubise in it was driven to capitulate in three weeks. Whilst Epernon blockaded La Rochelle, the king attacked and took Clerac, hanging the chief magistrate and pastor. In the middle of August the royal army encamped before Montauban.

Situated upon a lofty bank overlooking the Garonne and the Tarn, Montauban gives the idea of a place of great strength. But the chief attacks and defence during the famous siege were made upon and from within a little fortified suburb, that of Ville Bourbon, which lay beyond the rivers, and whose sole bulwark consisted in the breasts of the Huguenots who defended it. As the king and the constable were advancing to Montauban, orders had been given to disarm all the Huguenots throughout all the north and centre of France.† The religionists deemed these orders the precursor of those massacres which the mob, in default of the authorities, were always ready to execute. There took place, therefore, a general emigration. The old men and the females departed for Switzerland or Sedan, whilst the young and strong men betook themselves to Languedoc, to stand in defence of their religion. These were the soldiers which the royal troops

* See a full account of the negotiations in the Mémoires de Deagant.

† Mercure Français.

CHAP. XXVIII.

encountered on the bastion and in the breach of Montauban, and nothing could overcome their obstinacy and valour. In vain did the chiefs of the royal army set the example of daring: the Duke de Mayenne, the Marquis de Themines, perished, and the regiment of infantry, refusing to go to the assault—that of Toulouse, an ultra-Catholic city, melted away, and was no longer seen—the young nobles formed a battalion, and rushed to the assault of the Ville Bourbon. They gained the top of the bastion, and were for a moment victors; but the Huguenots returned to the charge, struggled with them on the bastion, and finally drove them from it, with the loss of a hundred of the best blood of France. There was no prosecuting such a siege; the blame of failure being left upon Luynes, who, indeed, did not display much bravery. Having assumed the office of chancellor *ad interim*, he was said to have employed, in sealing law papers, the time which others devoted to the assault. So, Condé declared Luynes to be an excellent chancellor in time of war, and an egregious constable in time of peace. Rohan having succeeded in flinging reinforcements into the town, the siege was raised in November, after having lasted nearly three months.*

The mortification caused by such a disaster, for the losses during the siege were enormous, alienated the king sensibly from the constable. He still, however, contrived to maintain his influence, and gave a strong proof of it, in obtaining the dismissal of Father Arnoux, the king's Jesuit confessor. As some amends for the failure before Montauban, Luynes caused the army to sit down before Monheur, which was captured and destroyed in December. De Luynes, harassed and disappointed, was here seized by fever, which, in a few days, carried him off, and spared him the fate of

* Relation du Siége. MSS. Colbert, 17; and Brienne, 227.

Concini. Small respect was paid either by the king or the courtiers to the memory or remains of the favourite. His body, placed in a rude coffin, found no other covering than a green card cloth, on which the few soldiers who guarded his funeral were seen playing at piquet—no unfit epitaph for one who had spent his power in a mere game of greed.* CHAP. XXVIII.

His death left the great prize of the king's favour to be disputed. The Cardinal of Retz (Gondi), who supplied the place of Father Arnoux, and Count Schomberg, who was chief of finance, held the principal authority, and were soon joined by Condé, who agreed with them in recommending a continuance of hostilities against the Huguenots. Louis the Thirteenth would have entertained no other idea, had not his ardour been damped by his ill success before Montauban. The queen mother joined her son in Paris, and, though still denied free access, managed to convey to him her counsels, or rather those of her confidant, Richelieu. These were quite opposed to the policy of the war.† The rebellion of the Huguenots was considered by Richelieu, as far less important than the events of Germany. There the House of Austria was completely triumphant. The Bohemians were defeated in the battle of the White Mountain, and the Elector Palatine a fugitive, his dominions occupied by the Spanish general, Spinola. The princes of the Protestant union, the former allies of Henry the Fourth, had, in order to save themselves, signed a treaty of neutrality. And Spain, about to conclude a marriage with the heir to the English throne, was prepared to resume the war with Holland, which, if successful, would leave France surrounded and menaced by its old hereditary enemies.

Louis the Thirteenth was so persuaded by these

* Mémoires de Beavais-Vayer.

† The Chancellor and Jeannin were passionately for peace, with Lord Doncaster, the English envoy. S. P. 1622.

CHAP. XXVIII.

representations, that he gave Lesdiguières the permission to treat with the Huguenots. But these, or at least the Rochellois, were too much elated by the success at Montauban to depend upon the monarch's indulgence. On the withdrawal of the king towards the close of the previous year to Paris, the Duke de la Force had taken a position at St. Foy, not far from his own castle of La Force, collected the Huguenot assemblies of the province, and proposed making himself master of the country between the Garonne and the Dordogne. The people of La Rochelle, masters of the sea, contemplated enterprises equally vast: Their plan was to send two expeditions by sea, one under Favas to seize the mouths of the Garonne, and another under Soubise to take possession of those of the Loire.* Building forts in both these regions and establishing camps, they hoped to levy duties on all vessels entering these rivers, and to dominate the whole coast from Spain to Britanny.†

Intelligence of these designs and movements were given by the Prince of Condé to the king, who was much provoked by them, and who reluctantly lent himself to the negotiations for peace which the queen recommended. At length on learning that Soubise had actually landed with an army north of the Sables d'Olonne, and that he proposed advancing through the marshes towards the Loire, Louis escaped, as it were, from his mother, and leaving the Louvre by a postern, came with the Prince of Condé to Orleans.

Although it was the clever head of Richelieu that recommended peace with the Huguenots, and acceptance of their demands‡, Louis was far more right in his abruptness, for the campaign upon which he now

* Mercure Français.

† The Huguenots followed the same policy on the Rhone, establishing the fort of Poussingues, and another to levy toll on that river also. Woodford's Letters, S. P. Foreign, 1622.

‡ Lord Doncaster brought in February to Paris the submission of the Rochellois on condition. S. P. O.

entered, of his own resolve, against them, proved most successful, and brought his rebellious subjects to his feet. Favas did not succeed in his attempts to establish a fort at the mouth of the Garonne. Soubise, who had collected a large force in the marshes near Oleron, the Poitevins flying to him from the severity of La Rochefoucauld, was suddenly attacked by the king. Louis had left Paris without men or money, but he contrived to muster his guards, 2000 Swiss, and two regiments of Navarre, with which he attacked Soubise, and completely routed him. The vessels in which they hoped to escape grounded, and the greater part of the Huguenots were captured. They were treated with the utmost rigour; many massacred in cold blood after their surrender, and the rest sent to the galleys.* The royal army was then turned against La Force, who, unless succoured by the Protestant provinces of the south and west, could not resist. He was able to muster not 2000 men. With these, however, several of the towns were most gallantly defended. Tonneins stood a long siege, Montpouillant, the son of La Force, perishing in it. St. Antonin was even more fiercely defended, the women repelling the assailants with pikes. Every partial assault failed; and it was only a general one of the whole army assaulting St. Antonin on all sides which carried it. Great respect was shown by his enemies to the brave and noble character of La Force, the obstinate defender of Montauban. The Duke of Elbœuf refrained from destroying the Château de La Force, and consented to its remaining in neutral hands. To win over the Huguenot gentry, and show no mercy to the lower orders or their pastors, seemed the rule adopted by the royal army. The duke himself was induced to

* Woodford's and Augier's Letters in S. P. O. Soubise had asked aid of King James and been refused. The letter in S. P., February, 1622.

CHAP. XXVIII.

make terms, and surrender St. Foy, a pardon being extended to his adherents. He himself received the baton of marshal, and a sum of money, as indemnity for being deprived of the government of Bearn and all military command (May 1622). The Huguenots were heard to say of their chiefs: "Chastillon nous a trahi, Rohan nous a livré, Soubise s'est fait battre comme un enfant."

Having reduced the Dordogne, that *galerie des Huguenots*, the royal army pursued its march up the course of the Garonne, capturing town after town. Lord Doncaster came to Louis's camp with proposals of mediation from King James, but they were declined.* Negrepelisse, near Montauban, thought fit to resist; when the cannon, having opened a breach, it was taken by storm, and all the inhabitants slain — even children were slaughtered, and the female population subjected to every indignity. This cruelty inflicted on Negrepelisse was due to its appertaining to the Duc de Bouillon.† This filled other towns with alarm, and none resisted, Montauban, however, not being attacked, as the king sat down before Montpellier.

The monarch had been led to expect its submission. The fortunes of the Huguenots were, indeed, reduced to the lowest ebb. In these years the old dissensions between the nobles of the party and the citizen classes had sprung up anew. The feudal power of the gentry was fast declining. When the king himself levied an army, he did so indeed by the gentry in each province, but he gave them funds for the purpose, without which they no longer commanded the service of their retainers. The resources were more scant with the townsfolk, and the grandees often brought pretensions more than any solid force or following. Such was the case with Cha-

* The seizure of all the English vessels in Bordeaux was another cause of his mission. They were afterwards released.

† S. P. O. France. Correspondence of January, 1622.

tillon, the grandson of Coligny, who at first commanded for the Huguenots in Nismes, the Cevennes and the Vivarais. He offended their zeal by recommending them to stand on the defensive, whilst they were eager to send succour to La Force and to Montpellier. It ended in open quarrel, Chatillon rallying to the king, delivering up Aigues Mortes, and receiving the baton of marshal. And about the same time Lesdiguières read his recantation in the church of Grenoble, and received the important grade of constable. Dauphiné was thus lost, the north portion of Languedoc neutralised. The Huguenots of the west were left to provide for themselves, with powers of resistance much enfeebled.

It was manifest, indeed, that the Reformers were no longer able, as of old, to maintain an army in the field capable of facing the royal forces. The Rochellois and La Force had just tried it and failed. All that was left was to defend the few towns they held. But when a glorious and triumphant resistance led to no ulterior result, and left the king the full command of the open country, with the facility of renewing the siege when it suited, there really was no hope. And this conviction caused the defection of Chatillon, Lesdiguières, and La Force. De Rohan and his brother Soubise alone remained staunch. The former had counted on a powerful diversion being made in the north by Count Mansfeldt, at the head of an army of German Protestants; but this failing, he was anxious to make terms before that chief should be hard pressed.

The Constable Lesdiguières, aware of these sentiments of Rohan, promised the king the submission of the town if a general peace were offered. The parties could not at first agree. And Louis, pitching his camp and erecting a tower close to his quarters to observe the siege, caused the high ground of St. Denis, close to Montpellier, to be occupied by several regiments. This

CHAP. XXVIII.

produced a sortie from the town, which drove the royalists from this point, and cost the lives of a number of their leading men.* It required great efforts, indeed, to prevent it extending to a defeat of the whole army. Notwithstanding this, De Rohan, in his memoirs, represents the town as incapable of long resistance, its garrison not exceeding 1500 men, the difficulty of reinforcing them being extreme. Augier, however, wrote that there were 4000 foreign soldiers in Montpellier, and as many townsmen. Richelieu, on the other hand, depicts the royal army as the scene of disease, discord, and discontent, sufficient, indeed, to induce the king to listen to terms, in despite of the opposition of the Prince of Condé. An accord was at one time concluded, when the Prince of Condé took care to spread a report within the town, that if he entered it his soldiers would treat the inhabitants like those of Negrepelisse. Hearing this they refused the king entrance, and the treaty was broken off. In order to renew negotiations, it was necessary to keep them secret from Condé. Indeed one of the king's difficulties proceeded from the conduct of this selfish and worthless prince, who did all in his power to induce the Protestants to prolong the war, in order to retain for himself influence and command. The king being without children, and the Duke of Orleans not of robust health, he looked to the succession of the throne, and was not a prince to shrink from facilitating that succession by irregular means. Louis saw that Condé aimed (*buttait*) at the throne, and made peace in order to thwart and to be rid of him.† Condé, on learning it, took his departure to Italy.

* The Duke de Fronsac, son of the Count de St. Pol, perished on the occasion, and Montmorency was badly wounded.

† Augier enumerates the partisans of peace to be the Constable, the Duke of Chevreuse, Crequy, and Bassompierre, against Condé, Schomberg, and Philipeaux, who pressed the war. Letter of September 9, 1622. S. P. O.

In the treaty concluded at Montpellier on the 19th of October, 1622, the king renewed to his Protestant subjects his promises of protection and pardon; he was to observe the never-executed Edict of Nantes, the most onerous part of which to him was, however, cancelled by the loss of all the towns of surety by the Huguenots, except La Rochelle and Montauban. But though ungarrisoned, they were still to enjoy their municipal liberties and to suffer "no innovation." Half the fortifications of Montpellier were to be destroyed, but it was to receive no garrison. Two of its consuls were to be Catholic, two Protestant.* The fort of St. Louis, erected near La Rochelle in order to bridle it, were to be destroyed. Rohan was to be paid a sum of money, a pension, and the county of Valois, in lieu of his governments. Of these, indeed, the Protestants were universally deprived. And it may here at once be observed, that none of the stipulations made to them were observed. A garrison was forced upon Montpellier. The fort of St. Louis was maintained. And the rule of keeping no faith with heretics seems as dominant a principle with Louis the Thirteenth as it was with the Guises and the Sorbonne.

The Huguenots, as a body, endowed with military privileges in order to defend their civil rights, may be considered as henceforth fallen. They lived, indeed, to make vain struggles for equality with their brethren; but the result could not be doubtful. The campaign of 1622 dealt them the fatal blow. And it was achieved by the resolution and activity of the young king himself, the queen-mother and Richelieu, who has gained the credit of crushing Protestant resistance, seeking and exerting themselves to dissuade him from the attempt.

* The king's *brevet* to Montpellier expressly says: "qu'il n'y aura ni gouverneur, ni garnison, ni citadelle." Half demolition of fortifications meant that the foundations of the walls were not to be taken up. Augier.

CHAP. XXVIII.

As Louis returned from his conquest of the Protestant south, he was met by his mother at Lyons, and at the same time by envoys from the Duke of Savoy, who complained that the treaties entered into with Spain for the independence of the Valteline were broken through by that power, and that Philip the Fourth was making strides to render himself as complete master of North Italy as his relative, Ferdinand of Austria, had become of Germany. Richelieu asserts that he recommended vigorous measures by the mouth of the queen mother. But the monarch found his ministers reluctant and wavering, and, what was most important, the finances in bad order. He sought to remedy this by change. Consulting Bassompierre, that courtier honestly counselled the recall of Sully; and it might have taken place, had not that able minister and financier been a Huguenot. The king pitched upon La Vieuville to replace Schomberg; and, as far as the finances went, was no better served. But La Vieuville, who, writes Herbert, from capucin had become captain, was spirited, and alike independent of the Church faction, and of the *barbons*, who deprecated offence to Spain. He caused some important resolutions to be taken in council, which, although they apparently anticipated the policy of Richelieu, were, nevertheless, mainly the result of his opinion and advice. Of those resolutions, one was a treaty concluded in February 1623 with Venice and Savoy to free the Grisons and the Valteline from the occupation of Spain.

This anti-Spanish policy was strenuously combated by the Brularts, who, father and son, filled the place of Chancellor and Secretary of State. They never ceased to represent that Spain could not be successfully resisted till Montauban and La Rochelle were reduced.* And Valençay, a creature of the secretary Puysieux,

* Herbert's Letter, S. P. O.

being commander in Montpellier, did all in his power to goad the Huguenots to rebellion. He maintained the garrison to prey upon the townsfolk; forbade the election of consuls; and when De Rohan came to protest, Valençay caused him to be arrested. He got together a mock deputation, and sent its members forcibly to Paris to ask for a citadel, in order to relieve the town from lodging the soldiers. The request was immediately granted, though the Huguenot deputies protested against the trick.*

The Brularts were no less active in their foreign intrigues. They went so far as to conclude a treaty with the Duke of Bavaria, guaranteeing to him the Palatinate and the electoral vote. La Vieuville, on discovering this, made use of it to undeceive the king as to the tendencies of the Brularts, and they were accordingly dismissed, a more conciliating course adopted towards the Huguenots, and a firmer one towards Spain.†

It was impossible, indeed, to render the policy of the French court decidedly liberal and tolerant; for the young king, though jealous of Spain, was still bigoted in his religious views, and looked upon the Protestants as enemies alike of God's authority and of his own. Louis himself now exercised a considerable share of personal influence in political resolves.‡ And whilst he dismissed the Brularts for being too Spanish, he eyed with suspicion those who were favourable to the Huguenots. At this time came the proffer of marriage from the heir of the English throne to the

* Herbert's Letter, S. P. O. Manuel, deputy-general, protests before the king at St. Germains, that the Huguenot deputation from Montpellier were but "*prisonniers conduits ici*, et tellement étonnez qu'ils ne savent pas ce qu'ils demandent." September, 1623.

† Herbert to Calvert, January 3. S. P. O.

‡ Herbert's letter of February 23, 1622, S. P. Foreign. Herbert's correspondence throughout this period gives the most perfect picture of the varying motives and influence of French policy.

CHAP. XXVIII.

Princess Henrietta Maria. It was very critical, either as enlisting England for an ally, or converting her into a foe. The queen mother favoured the match as a splendid one. The Huguenots hailed it as converting the French court, and impelling it into a serious war with Spain for the recovery of the palatinate. But Louis looked to render himself "more as arbiter in the quarrel between Spain and England,"* than as a principal in the affair. Two currents of air were thus established in the French court; the one blowing directly adverse to Spain and bigotry, the other against England and Protestantism. When the minister of that day spread his sail to one of the breezes, his rivals and competitors tacked so as to obtain the support of the other. One day Spain was triumphant, the next its enemies. La Vieuville, though a good politician, had not the art of expressing his designs in persuasive language. He wanted a penman for this purpose, and cast his eye on Richelieu, whose abilities he did not doubt, but whose ambition he feared. La Vieuville, notwithstanding, decided on employing him, and hoped to make use of him without giving him entrance to the council, or, at least, access to the king. Richelieu affected humility—pleaded ill health. He could not bear a crowd, especially that of the court. He was ready to give his council and assistance gratis. Won by this appearance of almost monkish humility, La Vieuville and the king both waived their objection to Richelieu, and admitted him at once to the council in April 1624.

* Herbert, April 13.

CHAP. XXIX.

FROM THE COMMENCEMENT OF RICHELIEU'S ADMINISTRATION TO THE DEATH OF LOUIS THE THIRTEENTH.

1624 TO 1643.

THE administration of Cardinal Richelieu is a period to which the French almost invariably look with predilection and pride. The cleverness and good fortune with which he maintained his power, the energy with which he successfully directed it, make them forget the violence, the bloodthirstiness, and treachery which accompanied them. To have extended the frontier of the monarchy, castigated and crushed its nobles, are merits which, with the majority of Frenchmen of the present age, would obliterate any defect. But more impartial observers cannot fail to ask whether the unmitigated despotism which the great minister established for the crown over all that remained of independence in class or institutions, was necessary for what he aimed at and achieved. When Richelieu assumed the reins of power, he no doubt found, as he expressed it, "the Huguenots forming part of the state, the grandees forgetting they were subjects, and each personage measuring his pretensions by his audacity." Yet was it impossible, by the aid of that unexampled respect and authority which had accrued to the majesty and person of the monarch, to have reduced the Huguenots to be peaceable citizens, and the nobles to serve in upholding the state, rather than in preying

CHAP. XXIX.

upon and disturbing it, by establishing a government of law and order, not of terror and arbitrary rule?

"The truth, indeed, and the true exculpation of Richelieu, is, that he by no means premeditated, from the first, the great and bad acts of his administration; neither did he acquire at once that fulness of power which could alone enable him to follow out a scheme of policy exclusively his own. It has been the error of Richelieu's historians to represent him as from the very outset master of the destinies of France. In order to heroise the great statesman—sufficiently a hero of himself, and within the bounds of truth—he has been depicted as a minister of such irresistible capacity and will, and Louis the Thirteenth as a monarch so feeble and so null, that the cardinal comes forward as the exclusive agent, the political divinity of the time; absolute where he had his way, and actuated by profound and wise dissimulation, where he seemed to swerve or turn aside. His character for spirit and sincerity is thus always sacrificed to the desire of upholding his sagacity; and instead of being allowed to contemplate him as a man, we are asked to worship him as a demon. Singular to say, his own memoirs, written in a great measure or dictated by himself, take the same view. They never doubt the cardinal's power, or excuse his tergiversation or treachery, his abandonment of friend or of purpose by the plea of his being overruled, and not having been really able to do more. The memoirs of Richelieu never question his omnipotence and omniscience; and yet the great minister was neither all-powerful nor all-wise. Louis the Thirteenth was no cipher, but, on the contrary, a very exigent master, and very often an extremely wilful one; and although this does not so much appear in the French memoirs of the time, it is fully delineated and thrown into relief in the copious correspondence of English envoys and agents at the court of France,

which are to be found in the collections of our State Paper Office.

If the foreign policy of Richelieu was thus, in the first years of his rule, modified by the king and the clergy, his domestic policy was the result of the terrible enemies which assailed, and the obstructions which beset, him. The court and its principal personages, especially queens and princes, the female sex being foremost, became his antagonists. Even these, to whom he was indebted for his advancement, as the queen-mother, and those who owed the recovery of their honours to him—such as Schomberg—formed no exceptions. He thrust aside every one, and deprived the entire upper class of its remaining influence and openings to ambition. Nor could he call the middle class to his support. A century's civil war had developed bigotry and ferocity, even amongst citizens. Mutual exclusion or murder had grown to be the only law; and whilst it was found necessary to suppress the privileges of the Huguenot towns, it was still more requisite to supersede those of the Catholics, whose intolerance was ferocious.

The despotic tendencies of Richelieu's administration were thus produced as much by the circumstances of the time as by any political theory of his own. Despotic monarchy, already erect and in growth, was strengthened by his prostration of all that could oppose it. But the age went with the efforts of the minister. The French of that day were incapable of appreciating the heroism of the Hollanders, or the stern love of civil and religious liberty which began to animate the English. Their regards were turned in an opposite direction, towards the south, and looked to Spain for the ideal of dignity, chivalry, and grandeur. Thither Corneille went in search of his heroes and his poetic sentiment; and thither were attracted the general admiration and sympathies of Louis the Thirteenth

CHAP. XXIX.

and his court: even Protestantism came to be looked on by the French of that day not merely as a heresy but as a vulgar failure. The regards of France were turned in every respect, in politics, in religion, and in taste, towards the past; whilst those men of northern countries, who boldly and generously looked forwards towards the future of political freedom and intellectual development, were considered more as foolish visionaries than as they were—the great practical statesmen, historians, and poets of the time.

The ideas which inspired the imagination and quickened the intellects of English or of Dutch, never entered into the head of Richelieu. Yet he is represented in his earlier years as dreaming and shadowing forth, in company with his friend Du Tremblay, afterwards the capucin Père Joseph, the scheme and scope of their future life.* Neither looked forward to being aught but politicians. Devotion and asceticism were indeed not unknown to the age—it was towards the close of François de Sales' life and that of Sœur Therèse, St. Vincent de Paul advancing to succeed them. It was the age of St. Cyran, and of the revival of a religion of sentiment in Port Royal. But Richelieu and Père Joseph felt an altogether secular vocation. Machiavel shared their studies with the Bible, and to immortalise themselves as statesmen and heroes rather than as saints was their ruling passion and idea. To endow their country with freedom or oppose its mental or political thraldom, could scarcely have entered into the views of young men bred to the Roman Catholic Church. The meaner and the narrower aim of making themselves and their country powerful formed their peculiar aspiration.

It was scarcely to be believed that Richelieu could enjoy less than absolute power, considering the state which he loved to assume, and the arrogant pride in

* Mémoires de Fontenay-Mareuil.

which he indulged. He found it necessary, perhaps, to assume this tone towards the proud aristocracy which envied and sought to humiliate him. No sooner was he nominated of the council, than he signified his right to take precedence, as cardinal, of chancellor and constable.* It was Sixtus Quintus throwing away his crutches the moment he became pope. If La Vieuville was startled at such boldness, the Spanish ambassador was still more surprised. This personage had pressed successfully, as long as the Brularts were in power, that the court of France should withdraw its alliance and its regiments from the Dutch.† As La Vieuville hesitated, the Spaniards hoped better things from the cardinal. Richelieu observed to them, that to offend the Dutch would be to prompt them to aid the Rochellois. The ambassador offered his master's fleet to reduce La Rochelle. But the cardinal struck into a far other line of policy. Lord Holland had come before Easter to negotiate a marriage between Charles of England and Henrietta, Louis the Thirteenth's sister. It was the gravity of refusing such an offer, the difficulties attending, and the wariness requisite on accepting it, that had chiefly necessitated the admission of Richelieu to the council.‡ He was decidedly for the marriage, and for accompanying it with stipulations in favour of the English Catholics, less for their sake than to save appearances with the Pope and his party. Such an argument was indeed necessary in order to procure the requisite dispensation from Rome. Whilst he sent Father Bruille thither on this errand, Richelieu arranged a treaty with England for aiding the Dutch, then sorely pressed by Spinola. Before Richelieu entered the council, Mansfeldt had no hope of inducing the French court to aid him. No sooner did that event take place, than negotiations commenced with the

* Mémoires de Brienne, Papiers d'Etat de Richelieu.

† His letters, Simancas Papers. A. Imp. Arch.

‡ Memoirs of Fontenay-Mareuil.

CHAP. XXIX.

Dutch, and Mansfeldt was summoned to the vicinity of Paris. The cardinal, indeed, proposed hard terms: he wanted the Hollanders to admit the Catholic worship and yield cautionary towns.* But he agreed in June to give them two and a half millions of francs, whilst Mansfeldt was to bring an army from England for their succour, and the relief of the Palatinate. Orders were at the same time issued for the raising of three armies, for the Bresse, the Metzin, and Picardy. Although this activity was in full accordance with the policy of La Vieuville, this prime minister, as he was considered, felt not a little jealous, and laboured in more than one direction to check the cardinal's influence. He took upon himself the negotiation of the marriage treaty, whilst he insinuated to the Spanish envoy that the three armies were a mere threat, intended to alarm. Richelieu revealed these imprudences of the marquis to the king, proved that he had consented to allow of the English marriage without the Pope's dispensation, and so wrought upon the monarch, that Vieuville was arrested and sent to Amboise, whilst the cardinal became sole director of affairs. (August 1624.)†

The finances being too important a department to be entrusted to one person, Richelieu appointed two, "of neither too high nor too low a rank." And in order to raise a large sum for the warlike enterprises which he meditated, he instituted a chamber of justice to overhaul the accounts of all the financiers for the preceding years. The most wealthy of the class fled from the process. The others compounded with their prosecutor and paid eleven millions of livres.‡ One should have thought that the minister would have

* Herbert's and Kensington's letters. S. P. O. France, 169, 170.

† Mémoires de Richelieu, those of Brienne, Fontenay-Mareuil, Bassompierre, and especially the Correspondence of the English envoys, quoted above.

‡ Mercure Français, t. xi.

endeavoured to put an end to such abuses by a better choice of agents, and a more stringent system of checks. He seemed, however, not to dislike the peculation which afforded him a sweeping sum whenever he might want it. And he proposed holding his chamber of justice periodically.* His system of fiscality was rather a trap to catch delinquents, than one to prevent their crimes. And the cardinal's ideas of justice were much of the same spirit.

Richelieu then turned his attention to foreign affairs. His view of them was evidently akin to that of Henry the Fourth, and had been manifested in the urgent recommendations of the queen-mother to be lenient towards the Huguenots and mistrustful of Spain. As soon as it became manifest that the court of England had broken with that of Madrid, a scheme similar to that of the late king had been conceived and drawn up, for the humbling of the House of Austria. It was a league nominally for the recovery of the Valteline and the Palatinate, but really to force the dominant family from Germany and Italy. Mansfeldt was to be given forces for the attack of the Palatinate, to be supported by Denmark and the northern princes, and the Marquis de Cœuvres to occupy the Valteline with 8000 men. The French king was to invade the Milanese in person with 40,000 foot and 16,000 horse, to be aided by the Venetians and by a Dutch fleet in the Mediterranean. The Duke of Savoy was to attack Genoa, and at least keep Savona. Openings were left for the accession of other powers, such as Tuscany, Mantua, and Modena. The Pope was to be aided to conquer the kingdom of Naples, he in return promising the voice and support of the clergy to elect Louis king of the Romans.†

From this large scheme the Italian States shrunk,

* Richelieu, however, avows in his Testament, that the remedy was worse than the disease.

† Copies of the League in 43 articles will be found in State Paper Office. France, 173–4.

CHAP. XXIX.

with the exception of the Duke of Savoy, and Richelieu's power was by no means so firmly established as to allow of his undertaking it. Louis the Thirteenth was the most jealous of princes, and it was by this sentiment he was to be wrought to good or to harm. He hated Spain, even more since his marriage with a Spanish princess, and Richelieu took advantage of this to crush Spanish power, especially in Italy. But the king, who was flattered by comparisons between him and his ancestor, St. Louis, also detested the Huguenots as rebellious subjects and profane heretics, and since damaging Spain was profit to them, Richelieu had to beware how he gave the monarch and the priestly party, which still had his ear, reason to question his zeal for Catholicism. Hence, when the English envoys proposed an alliance offensive and defensive as the corollary or preliminary to the marriage, Richelieu was obliged to evade the offer.* He adopted, however, several of the conditions of the large plan, such as aiding Mansfeldt, promising to allow him to march with an army levied in England, reinforced by French horse, across the North of France to the recovery of the Palatinate. He himself despatched the Marquis de Cœuvres with ample funds to raise troops for the liberation of the Valteline, whilst later it was arranged that the constable and the Duke of Savoy should invade the Genoese territories and take possession of the capital.† The success of these attempts would have separated the Spaniards under Spinola in the Low Countries from Tilly and the Austrian armies in Germany, deprive these again of their communications with Milan by the Valteline, and forbid access from Spain to North Italy by Genoa, which was at once a port of passage and a bank for Philip.

* Holland's Letters, Oct. 19.

† Mémoires du Maréchal d'Estrées.

CHAP. XXIX.

But the zealous prosecution of even these three schemes was too much for the influence of Richelieu. The only one of them in which he fully succeeded was that which he entrusted to De Cœuvres, who in the execution of it was beyond receiving counter orders or incurring disapproval. He raised an army in the midst of winter, placed himself at its head, drove not only the Spaniards from Coire and the Grisons proper, but compelled the Papal commander, to whom the fortresses of the Valteline had been entrusted, to surrender them. (December 1624.)* But this did not strengthen Richelieu's position at court, as it raised against him all the powerful agents of Madrid and Rome. The negotiations for the English marriage were attended with great difficulty. Richelieu, to pay court to king and clergy, insisted on much harder conditions than Vieuville had done;† and demanded a greater degree of tolerance for Roman Catholics than the government of James could grant. Vieuville had been contented with a verbal promise to this effect; Richelieu would have an express article in the treaty.‡ Nor was it till November 1625 that James consented to give, and France to receive, a secret writing, pledging the royal word to allow as much indulgence to the English Catholics as had been stipulated in the Spanish treaty.

In this there was evasion on both sides, Richelieu insisting on a written engagement for more than he could expect to obtain, and the English making the promise under the assurance that the French merely insisted for appearance sake, and would not demand

* Mercure Français, v. 10.

† The seven articles, which contented the marquis, became twenty-six in the hands of the cardinal. Vittorio Siri, l. v.

‡ The English envoys were greatly disappointed at finding Vieuville superseded by Richelieu. The former had induced Lord Holland to make a hurried journey to England, to explain the mere technical nature of the difficulty to the king, and obtain his consent to the arrangement. When the ambassador returned Richelieu was in power, and the negotiation had to be commenced over again.

CHAP. XXIX.

the execution.* These were weak foundations for a national alliance, which offered the only hope of checking Austria and Spain in overrunning North Germany and Holland. In the treaty there was no one sincere save Buckingham, if one so fickle and so swayed by personal and passionate feeling could be considered such. Richelieu had higher and nobler political aims, but character and necessity rendered his march towards them tortuous. But in whatever degree the ministers of the two courts were zealous, the monarchs they represented, and nominally led, were so by no means. James plotted with the Spanish agents at his court against his own favourite. Louis objected to any scheme for driving Catholicism out of the Palatinate. To meet these his objections, Richelieu, whilst he concluded the English marriage-treaty, necessarily promising passage and aid to the English army of Mansfeldt, assured the Catholic league of German princes, at the same time, that this army should not march to the Palatinate until February, and that before that time a treaty for the settlement of the Palatinate, in such a way as would content Bavaria, should be brought about. Acting in obedience to this preconceived system of deception, which Richelieu himself minutely discloses,† the French government demanded to be released from the engagement of allowing Mansfeldt to land in France.‡ A press had in the meantime gone forth through the towns of England, and Mansfeldt with his 15,000 recruits appeared before Calais. They were refused the permission to land, and Buckingham found himself, as he wrote, "in one of the

* You will easily imagine some conflicts in the very entry of the business, which yet have been with more noise than hurt. For even by the confession of those whom we treat with, much thereof hath been to content the Pope and satisfy the world, by letting them see they were not untrue to the Catholic cause. The particular passage you will fully understand by the verbal relation of the bearer.—*Kensington to Conway*, June 14, 1624.

† Memoirs, close of 1624.

‡ Carlisle's letter, December 31, 1624. S. P.

worst extremities of his life."* The recovery of the Palatinate, which he had promised to ensure as the result of the French marriage, was jeopardised. On the 12th of February Mansfeldt landed near Gertruydenberg, in the low grounds near which he lay encamped and unable to stir for two months, during which the 15,000 undisciplined English† dwindled from disease to the third of that number in May.‡ They remained even during the spring, and were led by the Prince of Orange to attack one of the works of Spinola, then besieging Breda. They were repulsed, though the assault was made with bravery. Breda surrendered (June 5), and the English army, with its commander, Lord Oxford, fell, to the last man, victims of James's insincerity and Richelieu's breach of promise. (1625.)

About the time of this forlorn attack of the English upon Spinola's fortifications, the marriage ceremony was performed between Charles the First and Henrietta of France. It was no longer a bond of alliance; for almost every purpose for which it had been negotiated had failed or been defeated. The Palatinate was occupied by a Spanish force. The fall of Breda was followed by Spinola's threatening Calais.§ Mansfeldt's army had been allowed to perish. Cœuvres was indeed in possession of the Valteline, but the Italian expedition had come to nothing. The Duke of Savoy and the Constable Lesdiguières, with an army of 26,000 combatants, crossed the Apennines from Asti in the spring to the attack of Genoa. The co-operation of a naval force was indispensable to the army, as it

* Buckingham to Villauxclercs, January 22, 1625. S. P. Brienne asserts, that when he and Effiat signified to Buckingham the refusal of the French court to allow the troops to land, the duke consented, or was tricked into consenting, to their landing elsewhere. The little truth there may be in this does not exculpate the French from the breach of promise.

† Such a rabble of poor and raw recruits were never seen, and go so unwilling; they must be rather driven than led.—*Chamberlain to Carlisle.*

‡ Mercure Français.

§ Letter of La Force, t. iii. p. 281.

CHAP. XXIX.

advanced along the coast. The Constable Lesdiguières had entered into a treaty with the Dutch to furnish the requisite number of vessels, Richelieu not daring to put his name or that of France to the convention. Lesdiguières himself, indeed, was to effect the conquest of Genoa without hoisting the royal standard. Such plans for stealing, rather than making, a conquest, led to the natural result. The Dutch did not appear; the Duke of Savoy turned to invest Savona; and the Genoese, raising an army, advanced to Aqui and took it. The Duke of Savoy and the constable were not able to force their position; and thus evaporated the audacious and ill-conceived plan of conquering Genoa.*

The cardinal and his panegyrists lay the blame of this failure upon the Huguenots, who took up arms in the spring of 1625, precisely at the time of Richelieu's combined operations against the Spaniards. The Huguenots, however, would not have broken the peace had they not been outrageously provoked and seriously threatened. Good faith and policy alike should have induced the government to have tranquillised them by the execution of what had been stipulated at Montpellier. But not one single condition had been observed. Thoiras, who commanded in the fort of St. Louis, close to La Rochelle, treated it in every way as a beleaguered city; whilst a fleet was preparing at Blavet, in Britanny, avowedly for the purpose of blockading it. Had Richelieu complete control over affairs, he no doubt would have prevented this. But he durst not, whilst attacking the Papal forces in the Valteline, and the Catholic party of Spain in the Netherlands and Genoa, show at the same time favour and protection to the Reformers. The king and the priestly party would have broken out.

The Huguenots were, perhaps, wrong not to trust

* Mémoires de Richelieu, his letters; Mém. de Bassompierre, Mercure, &c.

him. It was the advice that Lesdiguières and the Duke de la Force gave them. But the Rochellois, and Soubise, their admiral, were too fearful of the manifest design of blockading their port, to trust to a minister like Richelieu, who was obliged to hide and dissemble every tendency that was liberal, and every act even of justice.*

On the other hand, it must be confessed that the attitude assumed by Soubise and the Huguenots at La Rochelle was much more alarming and hostile to the monarchy than previous revolts. When the king, in 1623, had mooted the renewal of the war upon the Huguenots, he was told to be aware before he again attacked them. "They had no longer any princes or nobles amongst them who could be bought. And if the citizens, abandoned to their guidance, were threatened in their rights and creed, they would imitate the Dutch in their resistance to Spain, and defy all the power of the monarchy to reduce them."† The nature of the country between the mouths of the Loire and Garonne—flat, overrun by the sea and its inlets, and protected by marches—made it capable of being made another Holland. The previous attempts of Favas and Soubise evinced that this idea was not strange to them. And the conduct of the latter now gave strength to the suspicion.

Whilst the court had thus cause to dread what they considered the ambition of Soubise, he had equal cause to fear the court and its general Thoiras, who took undisguised measures for blockading the port of La Rochelle; a fleet of five vessels, which the Duke of Nevers had prepared at Blavet, serving as a squadron ready to be employed against it. Frequent petitions and envoys were sent to Paris to beg the execution of the

* This is fully depicted in the letters which passed between the Rochellois and the Duc de la Force. Mémoires de la Force, t. iii. p. 275.

† Mercure Français.

CHAP. XXIX.

treaty of Montpellier. As this was palpably eluded or positively denied, Soubise resolved on action; and, mustering some few vessels, he set sail and attacked the vessels of the Duc de Nevers in the port of Blavet (January 1625). One, the *Vierge*, of eighty guns, he carried sword in hand, making himself master of fleet and town. The Duc de Vendôme, who commanded the province, tried to block Soubise in the port by means of a heavy chain and some batteries. But after a week or two's delay, Soubise broke forth, and anchored his now formidable fleet of seventy sail off the Isle of Rhé.

Richelieu, alarmed at the unseasonable exploit of Soubise, accused the Huguenots of obstructing his designs to humble the House of Austria and free the Palatinate. He asked naval aid of England and Holland, which both willingly granted, in order to preserve the French alliance against Spain. But Richelieu insisted on their sending ships without full crews, knowing that Dutch and English sailors would not be zealous against their Protestant brethren. Soubise, notwithstanding his success, proffered all kinds of submission, and demanded to be employed with his vessels to aid the Dutch in acting against the Spaniards on the coast of Genoa. The king could not forgive the affront of Blavet. And Richelieu was obliged to prosecute the war against the Huguenots even more vigorously than that beyond the Alps.*

The death of James and the accession of Charles the First in March, 1625, would have served the purpose of Richelieu, had there continued to be war with Spain. The young monarch and his minister were incensed with the court of Madrid. But the ardour of the cardinal for a crusade against Spain was considerably

* Memoirs and letters of Richelieu: Mém. de Rohan; MSS. Fontanieu, 475, 476. Mercure Français, t. xi.

damped by the failure of his plans, and he began not indeed to abandon, but to adjourn, his project of hostilities with that monarchy. When the Duke of Buckingham came to Paris for the purpose of conducting to England his sovereign's bride, he took the opportunity of proposing personally to the cardinal that cordial alliance between the countries for the recovery of the Palatinate, and the humbling of the House of Austria in Spain, Germany, and Holland, which was the principal and understood condition of the marriage. An account of the conversation is given by Richelieu himself, who confesses that he drew back from the English minister's offers and his own former promises, limiting his views to making use of England against the Huguenots, in order to enable France to make peace with Spain, but in no wise to further the fair and common object of the alliance. The memoirs of the time relate how Buckingham paid his audacious addresses to Queen Anne of Austria, who was neglected by her husband and snubbed by Richelieu. She in consequence acknowledged herself flattered by the duke's attentions, and received his homage at her bedside, attended by her ladies. The good feeling between the two countries was not increased by such scandal. But there was quite sufficient cause for estrangement between the prime ministers of the two countries in the tergiversation and treachery of Richelieu, without seeking it in the duke's amorous homage to Queen Anne.*

One of the triumphs of Richelieu's policy, and triumph no doubt it was, consisted in his making head, by means of the English and the Dutch, against the naval forces which Soubise and the Rochellois had mustered. These powers lent aid to the French government against the froward Huguenots in the belief that,

* That English statesmen completely saw through Richelieu's manœuvres, is evident from the full and important letter written by Lord Carlisle to Buckingham, dated April 21, 1625. S. P. France, 173, 174.

CHAP. XXIX.

however Richelieu might be under the necessity of putting them down, he was at the time sincere and zealous in resisting Spain, and that, moreover, he was inclined to grant the Huguenots fair terms. Such good-natured dupes were the Protestants, that at the very time when Breda, unsuccoured by Mansfeldt or Richelieu, was obliged to surrender to Spain, a Dutch fleet in concert with the French faced Soubise. The latter in very defence attacked the combined fleet of Richelieu and of Holland with fire-ships, and succeeded in blowing up the Dutch admiral.* But the English vessels came to supply the loss to the Catholic squadron,† and Montmorenci, who had taken the command, appeared amongst the narrow passages and islands round La Rochelle in overwhelming force. The Huguenots had sent deputies to the king at Fontainebleau, and were in such hopes of peace, that a great number of the soldiers and sailors of Soubise's fleet were ashore at La Rochelle. The coming of the enemy intercepted their return. Montmorenci landed a force to reduce the Huguenots first in the Isle of Rhé‡ (September, 1625). Soubise, landing his crews, attacked the royalists, though double his number, with great gallantry, but in vain. He was routed with severe loss, and driven to his ships, of which he found the larger stranded and the rest in flight. A panic had seized Guiton, whom Soubise had left in command. Four of Montmorenci's vessels attacked the

* The Rochellian account of this affair was, that they asked the Dutch admiral, Haultain, to promise not to attack them, in which case they would respect him. He declined to give the promise, as he waited for orders, and added, that if Soubise had a mind to fight, he would meet him half way. On this Soubise did attack, beat off the Dutch and burned the ship of the Dutch admiral, Dorp. S. P. France, 175, 176.

† For the reluctance with which the English captains ceded their ships, and the determination of the English sailors not to combat the French Protestants, see Captain Pennington's letters to Buckingham. Cabbala, p. 323.

‡ Mémoires de Rohan; Mercure Français, t. xi.

Vierge, the largest ship of the Huguenot fleet, in which were but a few sailors. The chief of these, awaiting the enemy's approach, leaped into the powder room with a torch, blowing up himself, the ship, and the four vessels of the enemy. Under cover of this act of heroism, Soubise rallied his shattered squadron and retreated to the coast of England.*

The Duke of Rohan, although he suffered no such signal defeat as his brother, and had contrived by activity and by hurrying from town to town to keep the royal commanders in check, was still unable to take the field or give an imposing attitude to the Huguenot party in Languedoc. The Quercy had been in insurrection during the previous year, not on account of religion, but of the abolition of its estates, and the substitution of royal *esleus* (elect) to raise taxes according to the king's pleasure.† It was not difficult for Rohan to resuscitate their resistance. But the king's regular troops under Themines were too strong for both fiscal and religious discontent. Still several towns resisted, of which Themines only succeeded in capturing one, that of St. Pol. The marshal signalised his triumph by hanging its Protestant pastor, Seguiran, to the great delight of Louis the Thirteenth, "who triumphed as much in the hanging of the poor minister, as if he had got the news of the conquest of Genoa." ‡

Such a bigot spirit in the king rendered it difficult for his minister to pursue or persevere in his original plan of the preceding year for humbling the House of Austria. The principal portion of this scheme, Mansfeldt's expedition, had failed; chiefly from the French court proving false to its promises. This event, joined to what Buckingham saw with his own eyes and heard

* Mém. de Rohan. Account of action in Augier's letter. S. P. 177–8.

† Mercure Français.

‡ Lorkin's letters. S. P. France, 175–6.

CHAP. XXIX.

with his own ears, the refusal of the Cardinal Richelieu to lend any efficient aid to the Protestants of Germany, completely estranged the English and the Dutch.* There remained, therefore, for the French merely to turn round and make peace with Spain. And Richelieu admits that, had the Roman legate, Barberini, brought sufficient powers and offers to conclude that peace, he would have closed with them at once. But the Spanish court was hesitating and dilatory, and in order to bring it to reasonable terms, Richelieu was obliged to hold out with respect to the Valteline, and to keep up the semblance of amity with the English. The cardinal admits in his memoirs that these were but pretensions.

Such coldness and deceit, which the English were keen enough to see through, more than spoiled any good effects that could have been hoped from the marriage. Unfortunately, too, the French court, the cardinal, and their diplomatic agents, were in profound ignorance of the state of England and of the relative position and prospects of king and people. It is not surprising that Louis should be blind to the workings of free institutions, and to the necessities of a monarch who had to deal with them; but that Richelieu and his diplomatists should have been equally ignorant does excite astonishment. Their only ardour was to force in the suite of the queen, a bishop, with a whole army of priests, upon the English court, and compel it first to tolerate, and then give power to, the Catholics. When Charles's ministers tried to evade these exigencies, in order not to irritate parliament and people, the French attributed this to the personal resentment of Buckingham; and Blainville was sent over to discredit him with the king rather than remove the causes of variance between the countries.† The English favourite,

* The French king now refused, not merely the title of king, but even that of elector, to the unfortunate Palatine. S. P. France, 177–8.

† Blainville, Richelieu owns (Memoirs, 1629), had proffered

on his part, rightly saw, that what the nation and the king demanded of him was the recovery of the Palatinate; that for this the Spaniard and the French alliance had been tried in vain. The duke, therefore, repaired to Holland and concluded a treaty for a vigorous war with Spain, and for the invasion of Germany by the King of Denmark, supported by the subsidies of England. This plan of liberating Germany by subsidising the powers and armies of the extreme north, for which Richelieu has been so much panegyrised, was initiated by Buckingham in the treaty of the Hague.

The duke then proposed to visit Paris, and try the effect of his personal solicitation to bring the French minister round once more to the English and the Protestant alliance. Permission being refused him,* Lord Holland and Carleton were sent with instructions to urge the French government to enter into the league, and, at the same time, grant fair terms of peace to the Huguenots.† If these were equitable, the English court offered to employ its mediation, or, if necessary, its aid, in compelling the Rochellois to accept them.

There ensued, immediately, one of the struggles usual at the French court. Richelieu was for giving terms to the Huguenots, allowing Buckingham to come to Paris, and not breaking with England. The king and Schomberg were against this advice. They were, on the contrary, for accepting the terms offered by Spain, giving up the Valteline on the mere condition of the fortifications being demolished, and then proceeding to

French aid to the parliamentary and Puritan opposition.

* It was upon this occasion that Buckingham is made to swear that he would see and speak to the Queen of France, in despite of every impediment. Clarendon repeats the story, though he refers the words to another occasion. This historian might as well have questioned the gallantry of Buckingham to Queen Anne being more than an idle piece of vanity, as he scouts the story of the duke's having made love to the old and deformed Countess of Olivarez.

† Their instructions, signed Conway. S. P. France, 177–8.

CHAP. XXIX.

besiege La Rochelle.* During the last months of 1625, the Huguenots of Languedoc had refused to separate their cause from that of the Rochellois, whilst these insisted on the removal of the hostile fort from before their walls, to which Louis would not agree. Richelieu now sent privately to them (at which Schomberg, when he discovered it was indignant), as did the English envoys, to be content with the *status quo*.† When the townsfolk objected to accept such dubious and disadvantageous terms, the English envoys, to overcome the difficulty, proposed to guarantee the execution of the promises, which the French government were willing to make, the chief one being the demolition of the hostile fort after a certain time. Buckingham was not at first for giving this guarantee, and recommended the envoys not to take less favourable terms for the Huguenots than those of Montpellier‡, with the more certain execution of them. When the French clergy heard of the possibility of an accord, they came forward to prevent it, offering all the sums requisite for besieging and reducing La Rochelle. The king desired no better; this was his favourite scheme. And the queen-mother sent to inform the English envoys, that unless they gave the guarantee, and the Rochellois submitted, instant war and a siege would be the result.§ To prevent such an extremity, "La Rochelle being quite unable to defend itself against the 9000 of its enemies already before it, and in possession of the islands," the English envoys gave the guarantee, entrusting it to Montmartin to show to the churches. The deputies of the Rochellois, in consequence, submitted, and the treaty was concluded under English auspices. (Feb. 5, 1626.)

* Augier's letter, January 23. S. P.

† Holland and Carleton's letter of same date.

‡ Conway's letter of June 29; Buckingham's letter, S. P. France, 179.

§ Envoy's letter, January 27. Ibid.

CHAP XXIX.

The peace thus dearly bought and hastily patched up, was by no means well received by the English government. The envoys, to make it more palatable, urged Richelieu to join in operations for the recovery of the Palatinate. He pretended to hearken to them, but was all the time busied in negotiating and amending a peace of quite opposite tendencies, which was pressed upon him from Spain. His ultra-Catholic rivals—such as Father Berulle—had obtained from the king full powers for the French envoy at Madrid, De Fargis, to conclude a treaty with the Spanish government. And whilst Richelieu was employing Bassompierre to keep alive and enforce Swiss resistance against Spain in the Valteline, the king was giving away all that the cardinal was struggling for. De Fargis signed a treaty in the first day of the year; Richelieu remonstrated and resisted.* De Fargis received orders to render it more acceptable by obtaining fresh concessions. He concluded another in March scarcely more favourable, preserving for the Grisons merely a nominal hold over the Valteline, and granting the Spaniards the right of passage, which was the chief point contested.

Bassompierre recounts how indignant he was when he first heard the terms, and how he stormed at such concessions. But the courtier soon perceived that the king's hand was in it, and that Richelieu himself, however disgusted, durst not propose its total rejection. The marshal, therefore, imitated the cardinal, shrugged his shoulders, remained silent, and allowed that treaty to be signed for peace with Spain in Italy, and of course elsewhere (May, 1626), which completely contradicted and nullified the peace of a month previous with the Huguenots and with England. The contradiction and the imbecility of the double treaty are set

* Lettres de Richelieu, t. ii. His memoirs, as well as correspondence in Auberi.

CHAP. XXIX.

down by historians to Richelieu's power of finesse and dissimulation; whereas, in reality, the accord with Spain, giving up every advantage, was forced upon him, the blame being far more attributable to his weakness than to his deceit. Nor were they merely political or religious considerations which induced the king and Richelieu to conclude both treaties. The embarrassment of the finances, the exhaustion of the treasury, and the utter inability of the state to provide funds for the support of 90,000 soldiers, rendered peace a necessity.

The Huguenots exclaimed in anger and disappointment at the agreement with Spain following so close upon their own treaty. The English were still more mortified, their envoys admitting that they had been duped. But the French court had not leisure to listen to their recriminations. It was absorbed in embarrassments of its own. The question which convulsed it was, whether the king's younger brother, Gaston, then seventeen years of age, should marry or not the princess of Montpensier, to whom he had been betrothed. The queen-mother pressed the completion of the match, as the king's marriage had brought no heirs. Louis himself, and Anne of Austria, for that very reason opposed it; and the court thus became divided into two camps. What rendered the dispute more interminable was, that Gaston had no will of his own, and cared little whether he married or not, but did and said what his favourite of the moment suggested to him. Marshal Ornano occupied this position; and he dissuaded the prince from the marriage, but, at the same time, urged him to demand a seat at the council-board. All the ladies of the court, Queen Anne, and her favourite, the Duchess of Chevreuse, foremost, favoured Gaston's pretensions, hoping to make of him a rival to Richelieu. The cardinal, thwarted in his policy by the ultra-Catholics and Spain, and equally mistrusted by

the English Protestants, was now, moreover, assailed by the ladies and gallants of the court, headed by the king's brother. His only refuge and support was the king, whom he succeeded in persuading to consent to the marriage of Gaston, and to his contentment by means of wealthy appanage rather than of political power.*

The first step to bring the prince to accept such terms was to arrest his favourite Ornano, and send him to the Bastille.† When the prince came to expostulate, and the other ministers shrank from his choler, Richelieu avowed the act.‡ Immediately the fury as well as the fears of all who had plotted with Ornano the aggrandisement of Gaston were exaggerated to the highest point. They proposed to kill the cardinal at his country-seat. The Count de Chalais, of the Talleyrand family, one of the king's domestic officers, was to be the leading instrument. The Duchess of Chevreuse was the exciting spirit of the plot. The duke and the Chevalier de Vendôme, natural sons of Henry the Fourth, lent it, as princes, their countenance. The weakness of Gaston, and the fears of one of the conspirators, however, revealed the plot. Richelieu was alarmed, and professed himself anxious to escape by retiring altogether from such a combination of enemies. But the king felt that he himself was equally threatened in his authority and power. There was a rumour of his being set aside as imbecile, and of Anne of Austria espousing Gaston, who was to succeed to the throne. Louis is reported afterwards to have reproached his queen with her connivance in the plot. Her reply was, "She did not see that she should have gained much by the change!"

The accession of the Vendôme princes in the plot

* Mémoires de Brienne, Bassompierre, Fontenay-Mareuil, Richelieu, De Gaston.

† Tallemant de Reaux.

‡ Mémoires sur Ornano. MSS. Fontanieu, 477, 478.

CHAP. XXIX.

rendered it more serious, and necessitated the looking to the security of Britanny, where the eldest reigned more than governed, being descended from the old ducal family of the province. The court proceeded thither; and Vendôme and his brother, persuaded to repair to the king's presence, were arrested. Chalais had revealed to Richelieu the recent design to slay him at Fleury, and had been received with apparent favour by the cardinal. But, attached to Vendôme, he was so angered by their arrest, that he resumed his design of assassinating the cardinal, and was once more abetted in it by Gaston. It was, indeed, fortunate for Richelieu, that in all the plots against him, this weak prince, who could not maintain the attitude requisite for secrecy, was necessarily an accomplice. The plot being again betrayed, Chalais was arrested, and Gaston, charged with cognisance of his intentions, revealed them, and accused his friend. Richelieu's exasperation is not to be wondered at, nor his resolve to take condign vengeance on the instrument of those who were ever aiming at his life. Chalais was therefore tried and sent to the scaffold, the first of the many victims to that minister's ascendency. Gaston had repurchased favour with king and cardinal by accusing his friend; and whilst Chalais was perishing under some twenty blows from the axe of an awkward executioner, the Duke of Orleans led to the altar the wealthy heiress of the Montpensiers* (August 1626). Ornano expired in prison on learning the horrid details of Chalais' execution. The Count of Soissons and the Duchess of Chevreuse both withdrew into exile, leaving the cardinal the dreaded master of the court and of the government.

Throughout this perilous crisis, Richelieu's prime

* Her property was estimated at 330,000 livres annually, say the Mémoires de Gaston. For the trial of Chalais, see Archives Curieuses, liv. ii. tom. iii.

support was the king. The minister could do no less in return, from gratitude and from policy, than adopt the king's views of public affairs. This was to ally with Spain and Catholicism, and gratify Rome by the extirpation of the Protestants. In pursuing these aims, Richelieu may, indeed, have foreseen that it would consolidate his influence, as well as the royal authority, and enable him afterwards to revert, without impediment, to those schemes for curbing the House of Austria which for the present he was compelled to forego.

To quarrel with the maritime powers necessitated a navy. Spain, to be sure, offered whatever fleets it possessed, and proposed a joint invasion of Ireland and of England. But Richelieu, however allying with Spain for the moment, by no means sought to constitute France its dependant; and the Spanish minister, indeed, gave the cardinal the idea and the example of the policy to be adopted. Spinola, notwithstanding his successes in Flanders, could make no more impression upon Holland than Alva had done. The Dutch were indomitable behind their dykes. The sea offered to them the great field of strength and source of revenue. To encounter them upon this their own element, and destroy their commerce, became the aim of the Spanish general. In August 1625 appeared a Spanish *placard*, offering conditions to such capitalists as would subscribe to and form a company, or *admiralty*, for the monopoly of trade between Spain and the Low Countries faithful to it. The vessels were to be for fighting as well as trade; and, together with the royal navy of Spain, they were to drive the Dutch from the sea.* A completion of the project was to connect Antwerp with the Rhine by means of the Meuse and Scheldt, and, at the same time, close the Elbe, so as to exclude Holland

* Mercure Français.

CHAP. XXIX.

from all communication with the internal parts of the continent.

In imitation of this Spanish *Almirazgo*, Richelieu instituted the company of Morbihan, of 100 members, and a capital of 1,600,000 livres, giving them the port and islands, with copious privileges and immunities. But the despotic governments of Paris and Madrid vainly strove to imitate the freer Dutch. Capitalists would not trust the lawless extortions of absolute minister and monarch; and though historians lay the blame on the jealousy of the Breton parliament, the failure was, in all probability, more owing to the holding back of capitalists and subscribers. The minister, therefore, was obliged to have recourse to the only mode of naval armament and strength possible to a government like that of France—the undertaking it at state expense and under royal authority. He commenced by suppressing the office of admiral, as well as that of constable, vacant by the death of Lesdiguières. Not only were the expenses of both enormous—400,000 livres annually—but there was no possibility of keeping military accounts, the constable rendering none.* Richelieu caused himself to be appointed super-intendant of navigation, which gave him power over all the ports of the kingdom. His letters attest the activity which he applied to his duties; and D'Effiat declares that he made one million go as far as six millions did before.

There was, indeed, the most urgent demand for economy. Two-thirds of the revenue were mortgaged and paid away to creditors. The troops had not received their pay of 1625 or 1626. This pay amounted to 2,000,000 a month, and lenders required 20 per cent. interest. Such a state of things checked Richelieu more than all the representations of the ultra-Catholic

* Etats-Généraux, tom. xviii.

party; created dangerous doubts in the king's mind of the wisdom of his minister; compelled him, in consequence, to patch up treaties with the Huguenots and with Spain; and rendered it imperative that he should consult and obtain aid from an assembly.

From a representative one the cardinal shrank. He could not face the deputies of the *communes*, whose municipal and provincial rights he was daily destroying; nor yet those of the nobles, whose rank he ignored, and whose influence he set aside. He now summoned fifty-three notables—twelve prelates, twelve inferior nobles, who were knights of the order or members of the council, and twenty-nine presidents or king's officers of the law and finance courts. Before this body of officials, assembled in the Tuileries*, the keeper of the seals, Marillac, communicated, on the 2nd of December 1626, the necessities of the state. The treasurer, D'Effiat, afterwards entered into particulars, and made certainly a most liberal confession of the dilapidation and disorder of the finances.

These ministers represented the government as having spent forty millions annually during the war, without more than sixteen millions to meet them. The consequence was a debt of fifty millions. They had kept armies amounting to 91,000 foot and 6000 horse, costing two millions a month. This, counting active service at eight months, was sixteen millions, beside two and a quarter millions required for the troops in garrison. Marshal Schomberg declared that the army, even in time of peace, could not be reduced below 30,000 men. And a navy had become indispensable—the cost of it not less than twelve millions. These expenses, however, might be met by the existing revenue, were it free. There were nineteen millions raised from the *taille*, of which but six were unmort-

* Assemblée des Notables, 1626. Français, t. xii.; Mémoires de Etats-Généraux, t. xviii.; Mercure Richelieu.

CHAP. XXIX.

gaged and came to the treasury. Of the seven and a half millions of salt duty, little more than a million reached it, and this went to pay the interest of the *rentes* at the Hôtel de Ville. The *aides* were equally burdened. What the government asked, and what the notables granted, was to fund all this debt. The latter recommended the keeping up of two armies of 20,000 each; to do away with all but frontier garrisons; to abolish the system of pensions, as well as that of royal orders on the treasury without the countersign of a minister.

D'Effiat drew a frightful picture of the administration of finance. The *taille* he depicted as paid into the hands of 22,000 collectors, by them to 160 receivers, and by these again to 21 receivers-general. And as the treasurers were continually changing, there was no mode of control, except by a weekly inspection of accounts. Of the money spent on the artillery, or upon the navy, no one knew the details; not more than one-half the expenditure was clearly set down. When the king blamed Schomberg's administration of finance, in presence of Arnaud, the latter observed, "Your majesty appointed Schomberg super-intendant, but, at the same time, you sold all the places of his subordinates to the highest bidder, each of whom wanted to make his fortune. How then could Schomberg be held responsible?" The king was silent.*

The sole remedy that Richelieu could devise for this embezzlement was a permanent court to try financial peculators; and he proposed another, to try those guilty of rebellion or treason. The notables, composed of financiers and legal judges, of course, and justly, negatived these proposals. He also recommended a maximum price of bread, to which the notables replied by advising him to make the transport of corn free

* Memoirs of Arnaud d'Andilly.

between province and province. It is quite evident that domestic administration would have been conducted more legally, wisely, and humanely by Richelieu, in conjunction with a large council, even of officials, than it was by himself. The cardinal-minister was not, like De l'Hôpital, in advance of the notables or of the estates, whom he consulted, but in many points far behind them. When, however, Richelieu happened to be right, his strong will availed to carry out what any other individual or body must have shrunk from. Thus was it with his edict rendering duelling a capital crime, which he enforced against the highest. La Chappelle and Montmorency Boutteville were executed at this time for no other cause.*

Before and during the assembly of notables, the relations of the French court, both with the Huguenots and with England, were fast tending to a rupture. Whilst the French nullified all the hopes and broke all the promises made in the marriage treaty with England, and in the subsequent one which the ministers of that country had guaranteed to the Huguenots, they exacted a full performance of all the engagements of the English court to them. In March, some few weeks after peace was concluded, the Rochellois sent to the English court to say, that not one stipulated condition was observed towards them: the king's troops were not withdrawn, and so far from the fleet being sent away, it was reinforced by twelve more vessels, and more forts were erecting in the Isle of Rhé.† The French court, too, was equipping vessels in Holland.‡

* Richelieu was doomed to be the great foe of the Montmorencies. The name would have perished beneath the blows of the executioner, in his time, had not Boutteville's widow given birth to a posthumous son, who was the future Maréchal Duke de Luxemburg. Another of his measures, directed against the feudal noblesse, and sanctioned by the assembly of notables, was the dismantling of all fortified castles not adjoining the frontier.

† Rochellois's complaint to English council, March 13, 1626. S. P.

‡ Mémoires sur les Troubles. MS. Bethune, 9162.

CHAP. XXIX.

In August King Charles found it necessary to dismiss all the queen's French servants, who were setting their mistress at variance with him, and rendering the palace insupportable. Charles gave them £50,000 worth of jewels and valuables.* But Louis was greatly incensed at what he considered a personal affront; whilst the English were no less annoyed at the alliance between the French and Spaniards, and alarmed at Richelieu's project of the Breton admiralty. "It looked," said they, "to the mastership of the narrow sea." † Soubise was then lodged at Charlton House‡, to be near the court at Greenwich, and failed not to exaggerate all the hostile acts of Richelieu. The English were at the time dreading a hostile attack from the Spanish navy, and in their zeal and efforts for defence their commanders made little difference between the Spanish flag and that of the French, now allies of Spain. There were frequent complaints of captures, the French retaliating by the seizure, in November, of all the English vessels in the river of Bordeaux. Bassompierre was sent to London, and having the good sense to perceive that the priests and women of Queen Henrietta had overcome Charles's patience, patched up an accord, which would have sufficed for peace had the French court been inclined to it. But Bassompierre was ill received on his return to Paris, and his treaty disavowed.§ The assembly of notables had been called and consulted in the evident intention of proceeding against the Rochellois. The king took advantage of their communications with England—which were inevitable results of their guarantee, and of the French breach of all conditions—to declare that he would chastise them. He sent in February to demand that La Chapelle, Salbert (both pastors), and Des Herbières should be exiled, for holding communication with England. The Rochellois, alarmed,

* Conway to Carlisle, Aug. 9. S.P.
† S. P. September 1626.
‡ Still standing.
§ His Memoirs.

sent a deputation thither for support. Although Lord Holland had long since advised Buckingham not to take the defence of La Rochelle*,—which from its position could not be succoured from sea, "whilst there was not a head amongst the Huguenots save Rohan's,"—and although the guarantee which England had given the Rochellois fell short of any promise of military support, still the English government could not hesitate; for a treaty between France and Spain for the invasion of England had been signed at Madrid in March, and Olivarez, to render the quarrel between France and England flagrant, informed the latter of the circumstance.†

It appears from a letter which is extant, from Buckingham to Richelieu, that the latter desired to enter into communication with the English minister, and if possible to avoid war.‡ Buckingham proposed upon this to proceed to Paris, but Louis intervened and would not permit it. On April 25th appeared an English order in council to seize all goods brought to England in French bottoms. The French replied by a similar edict. Buckingham's plan was at first a vast one, little in accord with the narrow resources of England§, at least under his government. He proposed to send an expedition to Normandy, another to La Rochelle, and the most considerable to Guyenne, which was to rally the Huguenots under Rohan at Montauban, whilst the Duke of Savoy engaged to join them with a large army. Montague, who negotiated these schemes, was seized by Richelieu in Lorraine, and conducted to the Bastille. Little information was wrung from him, but Savignac, in May, was able to reveal the English negotiations to the cardinal.‖ Soon after, Buckingham

* Holland's letters of January 23, 1626. See Murden, vol. i. p. 162, for quarrel between Buckingham and Holland about France.

† Fontenay-Mareuil, 1627. Ratified April 20. Memoirs of Richelieu.

‡ S. P. O. Printed at end of chapter.

§ S. P. O. France, 184, 185.

‖ S. P.

CHAP. XXIX.

informed Rohan that the only expedition he could then accomplish was that for La Rochelle. Rohan himself, indeed, deprecated the English coming till September, when he wrote that he would be in a condition to take up arms.*

The court of France was, however, determined not to wait, and was only delayed during the month of June by the severe illness of the king. He had even set out ere the malady declared itself. Buckingham and Soubise resolved, if possible, to anticipate him, and their fleet of 90 vessels appeared off the Isle of Rhé on the 20th of July. Great was their astonishment at finding the gates of La Rochelle closed against them. The magistrates would scarcely listen to Sir William Beecher, declaring they must first consult not only Rohan, but the churches, and that, at all events, it was a fast-day. With such an answer Beecher was dismissed. Soubise himself then undertook the task, when the Rochellois made the same declaration; nor was it till September that the town declared itself.† Denied entrance to La Rochelle, Buckingham turned to the reduction of the Isle of Rhé. Thoiras, for the king, held its two fortresses, and came with 3,000 infantry to oppose the landing, and, what the English utterly wanted, cavalry. The first charge of these drove the invaders into the sea; but they at last made good their landing, and 8,000 of them, under Buckingham, immediately invested Thoiras in St. Martin del Ré. He was not aware of the strength of the fortress, which Richelieu describes as "the finest and strongest in France."‡ The siege was a work of difficulty, the rocky ground resisting the effort to sink trenches; still, by means of his fleet, and vigilance, Buckingham held the place blockaded for seven weeks. To breach and take it by assault had been found impracticable. Meantime the

* S. P. France, 187. † Ibid.
‡ Mémoires de Richelieu, 1628.

CHAP. XXIX.

royal forces were collecting on the mainland, in numbers capable of overwhelming the few thousand English; and a whole navy of boats were prepared to launch with the great flood tides towards St. Martin. The English vessels were drawn up so as to intercept them. But on October the 7th, fifteen of these barks, out of a far greater number, succeeded in reaching the fort, and thus introduced provisions for several weeks. This event disheartened the besiegers, and they determined to abandon the blockade.* A general assault was then tried, which was unsuccessful; and in a few days Schomberg landed in the island, with a force superior to that of the English. Nothing remained for the latter but to embark, which they succeeded in doing on the 19th of November, four months after their landing. Had there been any vitality in the Huguenots of Languedoc or in those of La Rochelle, they would have taken advantage of these four months either to create a diversion, or to pour puissant succours into the Isle of Rhé.†

The English fleet had scarcely departed when civil commotion arose in La Rochelle, between the partisans of the English and those of the royalists. Whilst the townsfolk were thus divided, the king and Richelieu surrounded the devoted city with lines of circumvallation, connected with strong towers; and, at the same time, the cardinal turned all his energies to complete a barrage to blockade the port. As the entrance to the harbour of La Rochelle passed for a certain distance through two tongues of sand, the possession and fortification of these were indispensable to the security of the town. The Duc d'Epernon long since proposed taking possession of the two jetties, and throwing a

* De Vic's letter, October 22. S. P.

† For the expedition to the Isle of Rhé, see Hardwick Papers; the Mercure Francais, tom. xiii.; Fontenay-Mareuil; Relation du Siége; Mémoires de Rohan; State Papers, France, 187. MSS. Fontanieu, 475, 476.

CHAP. XXIX.

dyke across.* The supineness of the Rochellois in not providing against so obvious an enterprise, is inexplicable, except by the party divisions of the town. Richelieu now undertook to complete the two arms of the dyke, of 100 toises each, built with dry stones, with apertures for the sea to pass between them. That in the middle was blocked by a fort, and there were also forts at the commencement and at the extremities of each arm of the dyke. Before it Richelieu placed a number of vessels, some 300 tons each, made fast to the ground with stakes, and joined together. Within these, barks mounted with cannon were to lie, the whole presenting an array of artillery more formidable than perhaps army or navy had ever faced.

Commenced in November, the work was well-nigh completed when a furious tempest, on the 1st January 1528, swept away large portions of the front of the wall. It was soon repaired. Spinola came to survey and to admire it. Although the Spanish fleet had sailed to Morbihan, it could be of little service this year; but Spinola promised, in execution of the treaty of the previous March, that Spain should be ready in June with a large fleet for the joint invasion of England. He warned his court, at the same time, that La Rochelle would certainly be taken; and this new ally of France determined not to sit still, but take advantage of the occupation of French armies to besiege Casale. Unable to take present revenge of Spain for such infidelity to the alliance, Richelieu prepared to make the House of Austria pay retribution at a future day, by despatching an envoy to Gustavus Adolphus, King of Sweden, who, since the defeat of the Danish monarch at Lutter, seemed the only prince capable of offering resistance to the imperial generals.†

Richelieu's chief dependence for the capture of La

* MSS. Fontanieu, 477–8, June 25.

† Fontenay-Mareuil.

Rochelle was in himself, for he soon perceived that not only were the Huguenots obstinate, and the English bent on aiding them, but that the ultra-Catholics of his own court more dreaded than desired his success. The Spanish partisans declared that the king's victories over the Huguenots would turn his arms, unimpeded, against the House of Austria; the French military commanders feared, if not this, at least a diminution of their own importance from the king's success; and Bassompierre expressed these sentiments when he observed, "We shall be fools enough to take La Rochelle." Richelieu did not trust them. He vowed most passionate vengeance upon whosoever allowed provisions to reach the besieged in return for bribes; and to avoid another kind of peculation, he appointed paymasters to give the troops their allowance, instead of entrusting this to the captains. The cardinal was obliged to employ ecclesiastics for generals. One of them—the Bishop of Mende, Queen Henrietta's chaplain, driven out of England by Charles—died at the siege, and gave orders that he should be buried in La Rochelle.

During the winter, the Rochellois, under their heroic mayor, Guiton, rejected all thought of surrender, and deterred even Richelieu from an assault. His only hope was to reduce them by famine. Louis grew weary of so tedious and inglorious an enterprise, and determined to withdraw to Paris. It was a critical moment for the cardinal, who knew that the courtiers with whom the monarch would be surrounded were all hostile to him, and that the queen mother, who had quarrelled with his niece, the Duchess d'Aiguillon, might now be ranked amongst his enemies. Still he knew, at the same time, that the best recommendation to the king was success, and that if he captured La Rochelle he would surely command the royal favour. The cardinal therefore determined to stay, and to have

CHAP. XXIX.

himself appointed lieutenant-general. The king left on the 10th of February, and Richelieu hastened the completion of the dyke and the sinking of vessels charged with stones to bar all passage. He convoked, at the same time, an assembly of the clergy at Fontenay, from whom he obtained a grant of three millions. Although the English contrived to throw three or four vessels, with their cargoes, into the port of La Rochelle in March, the stockades of the cardinal stopped the renewal of such succour. At length the English fleet, of about fifty sail, under the Earl of Denbigh, made its appearance in May. Its commander was much astonished to find in his way the gigantic works of Richelieu—a double pier covered with batteries, vessels sunk in the passage, and a fleet of cannoniers to dispute the passes. To force a way into La Rochelle by sea was impossible. The English fleet bore 6,000 men; but such a force could make small impression upon the 30,000 soldiers whom the king commanded round La Rochelle. The English admiral bore away to the neighbouring islands.

It was a distressing sight for the townsfolk of La Rochelle, already reduced to great straits for provisions; and notwithstanding all the efforts of their commander, and of their mayor, Guiton, an offer of peace made by the king was entertained, and might have ended by the town submitting. But on the 2nd of June came a letter from the English king, promising that he would risk his three kingdoms rather than not relieve La Rochelle. The citizens accordingly resolved to persist in holding out. This was but luring the famine-stricken people to further destruction; for four months more elapsed ere the British fleet reappeared, under Lord Lindsay, after the death of Buckingham. During this time the Rochellois suffered all the fearful extremities of famine. They consumed every living animal, fed upon such weeds and garbage as the sea threw

up, and, later, upon rations of boiled leather. Such suffering rendered too many desirous to surrender; but the heroic mayor, Guiton, declared that all should perish rather than submit—a resolution which the dwindling number of the besieged as heroically adhered to. Ten thousand are calculated to have died of hunger. When the English fleet did reappear in September, it was merely to cannonade and parley alternately. Even the cannonading could only take place when the tide was out and the wind favourable. Nothing could be done to save La Rochelle except by landing an army, and the English had not a force adequate to the enterprise. Their only troops were such vagabonds as they could pick up in the great towns, possessing the courage, indeed, of their country, but neither discipline nor constancy, nor a motive for displaying a soldier's hardihood.

Under such circumstances, it was idle either to fight or to negotiate. Early in October, the English, although they did not sail away, recognised the vanity of their efforts. Montague and others of the English were brought to see the dyke, and declared that to take, destroy, or pass it, were alike impossible.* The Rochellois, in consequence, demanded conditions of surrender. Richelieu offered them an amnesty for the past, and the exercise of their religious worship, but abrogated all their privileges and franchises—those of the nobles of the region, as well as of the citizens of the towns—and all were subjected to the *corvée*. The victors entered La Rochelle on the 30th September, 1628, and found the enemies who had so stubbornly resisted them to consist, at the last, of no more than ninety English and sixty-four French.† The rest of the population, of age to bear arms, had perished.‡

* S. P. France, 189. Letter giving account of Montague's visit.

† Mémoires de Richelieu.

‡ For the siege of La Rochelle see Journal du Siége, in Griffet; Hist. de Louis XIII.; the several

CHAP. XXIX.

As it was only to these sixty-four French survivors that Richelieu accorded the continuance of their worship in the town, no stranger Protestant being allowed to settle in it, the grant of tolerance was illusory; and the result was, that every Huguenot that could emigrate from the conquered region did so, bringing his industry and free habits of action and of thought to England, Switzerland, or Holland, and leaving those marshy and sea-inundated shores barren and depopulated to this day.*

The necessary complement to the reduction of La Rochelle was to deal a similar blow to the resistance of the Huguenots of the south, who still pretended to maintain their privileges under Rohan. The winter would not have impeded Richelieu; but the affairs of Italy were more urgent. On the death of the late Duke of Mantua, who had left but a daughter, his inheritance devolved to that branch of his family, the Gonzaga, which had settled in France, and were styled there Dukes of Nevers. The marriage of the duke's son with Marie de Gonzaga rendered their right of succession indisputable. The Spanish court, however, not suffering the idea of a French prince ruling in Mantua, raised up a pretender. The Gonzagas possessed not merely Mantua, but a large portion of the hilly region which extends between Turin, the Po, and the Genoese Apennines. This territory, known as the Montserrat, and its capital, Casale, had been long coveted by the dukes of Savoy, who, cheated and abandoned by France in the treaty of Monçon, now leagued with Spain to oust the Duke of Nevers, and get possession of the Montserrat. They laid siege to Casale, into which a French commander and garrison had thrown themselves. To preserve his Italian in-

histories of La Rochelle; Mercure Français, tom. xiv.; Fontenay-Mareuil, Rohan, De Pontis; Richelieu, Memoirs and Letters; State Papers, France, 189; and MSS. Fontanieu, 477–8. * Michelet.

heritance for the Duke of Nevers was the interest of France; and Richelieu, instead of sending his victorious legions from La Rochelle to Montauban or other Protestant strongholds, marched them into Dauphiné, to the passes of the Alps. Though the queen mother was opposed to this warlike policy, the Duke of Nevers having been her enemy, and the Duke of Savoy her son-in-law*, the cardinal nevertheless persisted in it, induced the king to put himself at the head of the army at Grenoble in mid-winter, and pass the Mont Genevre on the 1st of March. Dauphiné then extended to the other side of the mountains as far as Oux; but between this and Susa the Duke of Savoy had thrown up intrenchments and posted an army. Nothing daunted, the king ordered the attack; and the marshals Bassompierre, Crequy, and Schomberg, placing themselves at the head of a body of volunteers, carried the intrenchments in a short time, the Duke of Savoy himself narrowly escaping capture. The French occupied Susa, and soon after its castle. This feat, which struck terror into the Spaniards and their allies of North Italy, was sufficient to raise the siege of Casale, and compel the Duke of Savoy to accept terms of peace (April 1629).†

The king and Richelieu then turned their arms against the Huguenots. In a great measure for the sake of striking them with discouragement, peace was concluded with England. That country, by the dissensions between its king and parliament, came, indeed, to be blotted from the list of powers which influenced the politics of Europe. Peace with France as well as Spain was forced upon it. And the first, or the chief causes of dispute—the mutual captures by sea, the English protection of the Huguenots, and the

* See Mémoires de Montglas for the reasons.

† Mém. de Bassompierre, Richelieu, Fontenay-Mareuil, Mercure Français.

CHAP. XXIX.

aim of converting England by means of the queen's chaplain being disposed of by events—an accord was speedily come to.

The lofty plain of central France, which rises to its greatest height in Auvergne, sinks eastward to the Rhone, and southwards towards the Mediterranean in a semicircle, the descent forming a mountainous, a wild and wooded country. The hills which slope towards the Rhone form the Vivarais; those towards the Mediterranean the Cevennes. Amidst these hills French Protestantism had struck its deepest roots; and amongst them the royal army was now marched to uproot and destroy. The object of its first attack was Privas, capital of the Vivarais, the least fortified of the Huguenot towns.* It had but 800 defenders, and Louis brought 9000 soldiers to the siege. The Huguenots, though they gallantly repelled the first assault, struck by the inferiority of their force, were for yielding. But Richelieu was ill; and the king, thus left to his own instincts, declared his purpose of hanging the 800 Huguenots. The commander, nevertheless, sought to surrender; but in the act the powder magazine blew up, by accident according to some, by the act of a Huguenot according to the royalists. The catastrophe served as a pretext for putting the greater part of the garrison to the sword, and sending the rest to the galleys. Privas itself was set on fire and totally destroyed; whilst all the property of its inhabitants was declared confiscated to the crown.†

This terrible example of indiscriminate massacre, destruction, and confiscation, had its effect upon the towns not only of the Vivarais, but of the Cevennes, into which the royal army immediately marched. Alais was first invested and reduced (7th June), the

* Quasi sans fortifications. Fontenay-Mareuil.

† MS. Bethune, 9323; Mém. de Rohan.

cardinal preventing a repetition of the horrors of Privas. He was in treaty with the Duc de Rohan for the submission and pacification of the entire south. That chief, on finding that England could no longer give him support, had made the vain attempt of procuring it from Spain. At last, finding resistance idle, he summoned the estates of the Cevennes to meet in Anduze, for the purpose of inducing them to yield to the royal authority, and consent to what most alarmed and humiliated them—the razing of their fortifications and the abolition of their municipal rights. The great towns especially were reluctant to part with what, to them, was existence. But Richelieu was inexorable. Royal armies had already laid completely waste the entire territories surrounding Nismes, Castres, and Montauban. And Rohan plainly pointed out to them the impossibility of their maintaining a siege against the royal armies. Finally, therefore, all submitted. Louis made his entrance into Nismes; and at a later date (August 20, 1629), the king having returned to Paris, Richelieu was received into Montauban. The terms of peace had been concluded at Orleans in the June preceding. They were the oblivion of the past, re-establishment of the Edict of Nantes, demolition of fortifications, respect of temples and cemeteries, and restoration of property confiscated.*

Thus terminated the efforts of the Huguenots to maintain their existence in arms. It was unfortunate that their cause should have been placed upon such a basis, since, to make their right dependent upon their military strength, was to defy the principle of monarchy as well as the authority of Rome. But the Huguenots had had no choice. The enemies of their faith hated them as criminals, and as a race to be exterminated. Nor could any promise or pacification the most solemn convert or bind them to tolerance. The Huguenots,

* Mémoires de Rohan.

CHAP. XXIX.

therefore, had no security, except behind their own strong walls, and forming, no doubt, a state within a state. Henry the Fourth himself acknowledged this, when he allowed them the fortresses of security, and stipulated to pay their garrisons, whilst he permitted them to choose the commanders of them.

Such an arrangement, however tolerable at the close of a civil war, could not be expected or allowed to endure under a regular monarchy, especially of that despotic kind which became developed in France. When every order and class and institution in the country was laid prostrate before the throne, the Huguenots could not be allowed to remain independent. To reduce them to the normal condition of subjects was no easy matter. Could the laws and institutions of the monarchy, indeed, have secured them that tolerance which their grouping together, within their own walls and districts, procured, they no doubt might have parted with their invidious, and their then useless privileges. But to bring about such a compromise required a monarch whose word they could trust, a senate or a parliament habituated to respect their own decrees, and make others do so. The new century, unfortunately, brought none of these great aids to civilisation and freedom. Parliaments became null; the law-making power was left to the king and his councillors. And these continued to employ all the deceit and dissimulation of the previous century, without the excuse of being driven to it by want of power. Louis the Thirteenth was ready to make any promises in treating with the Huguenots; but he no more dreamed of keeping them than did the Valois.* "What is it yé want—say frankly?" ob-

* Take, for example, the razing of fort Louis, which was promised in the treaty of Montpellier, and afterwards verbally when Buckingham interfered—though there never was even an intention of observing the promise.

served the English ambassador in France to the Huguenot deputies who had come to Paris. "What we want," was the reply, "is a government which will treat in good faith." * CHAP. XXIX.

Few statesmen could have been found fitter to have pacified and reduced the Huguenots by fair conditions than Richelieu. He was no bigot, and did not look with ferocity upon religious dissent. But he was compelled to feign the fanaticism which he did not feel, such being the king's own sentiments, as well as those of Father Berulle and the zealots, who held influence over the monarch. Had Richelieu, like De l'Hôpital, enjoyed a legal education, his intelligent mind would, in all probability, have seen the necessity of founding a monarchy upon laws and institutions, and even liberties, instead of turning back to the barbarism of political science, absolute rule. But, as a Catholic churchman, he could conceive no other source of power than authority. And the only system of government he could imagine, was that which prevailed in the infancy of society and of knowledge—the making millions of men depend upon the intelligence and will of one, in nine cases out of ten the most ignorant and incapable of them all.

In such a state of law and politics, an opinion, especially a religious opinion, in order to exist or be avowed, must be dominant; and this could only be attained with the sword. The Huguenots attempted it; but forming, as they did, a minority of decreasing rather than of growing numbers, their failure and subjugation were inevitable. The immense increase of the power of the crown, of its pecuniary resources, its standing and disciplined army, its formidable artillery, precluded every hope of successful resistance. The feudal and princely aristocracy, separate and combined,

* State Papers, France, 178.

CHAP. XXIX.

had made repeated efforts and failed. The Huguenots, intrenched in a few strong municipalities of the south and west, and the peasant population of the Cevennes, made a much more gallant, but equally ineffectual, resistance, and like everything, men and opinions, that were French, underwent the yoke of absolute power. In the hands of Richelieu that power was a tolerant one, and sanctioned the right of Protestant worship. But it was plain that a bigot successor to the minister and the monarch could at any time withdraw this tolerance, which remained without any guarantee in the institutions of the country.

The Huguenots definitively reduced, and peace concluded with England, Richelieu had power and leisure to resume that purpose which he had been compelled to adjourn—the rescuing North Germany from the clutches of Austria. The uninterrupted and unexampled triumphs of the emperor and his generals were indeed calculated to alarm, not only the Dutch and the Protestants, but the French themselves. The imperialists were masters not only of the Rhine, but their troops occupied Alsace, and encouraged the House of Lorraine in its hostile sentiments. This family had greatly declined in influence and power. The Duke of Guise, not pleased with the cardinal, who had ill-requited his naval exploits by the deprival of his command in the Mediterranean, had but feebly seconded the king's efforts against Savoy. Slight attention, indeed, was paid to the affairs of the House of Lorraine, until Monsieur, the king's brother, took refuge at its court of Nancy in discontent.

Gaston, too, had been ill-treated. His mother thwarted his designs of marriage. He became enamoured of Marie, daughter of the Duke of Nevers and Mantua. The queen mother, who detested the latter, would not hear of the match, but negotiated to procure a Florentine princess for her second son.

Richelieu would allow him no political influence, and the king opposed his obtaining military command or renown. When appointed to that before La Rochelle the king and cardinal had taken it upon themselves, and so superseded him. Later he had been induced to forego the project of espousing Mary of Gonzaga, by the offer that he should command the army in Italy, and lead it to relieve Casale. This was no sooner promised than Louis the Thirteenth was deprived of sleep*; his brother's projected laurels made him miserable. The monarch, therefore, marched to Italy himself, as he had done to La Rochelle, and Monsieur, as Gaston was called, had but to withdraw to his principality of Dombes in dudgeon. The queen mother, in the king's absence, learning there was a plot for concluding the marriage between Gaston and Marie of Nevers, sent the latter with her aunt to the donjon of Vincennes. At this Gaston was still more indignant, and withdrew to Lorraine. (September, 1629.)

It was not merely with the enmity of the presumptive heir to the crown that Richelieu had to cope. The queen mother was now openly hostile, and refused to show the commonest courtesy to the cardinal. Nor was it without some reason that she censured his policy. Following what had been the conviction of Catherine of Medicis and of Henry the Fourth, she deprecated her son's directing his military efforts beyond the Alps. She was for respecting the Duke of Savoy, and leaving Italy alone. Richelieu, on the contrary, was animated by patriotic dread of the House of Austria, and by personal rivalry of Olivarez. He desired to make France the first power in Europe, and deprive both Emperor and King of Spain of such pretensions. Nor could this be considered vainglory or ambition, for the House of Austria then predominated from the Baltic

* Bassompierre.

CHAP. XXIX.

and the Scheldt all round the north and east of France to the Mediterranean, west of which Spain menaced both from the Pyrenees and from the ocean. If Francis the First found it necessary to resist such an ubiquitous and ambitious neighbour, the duty was still more incumbent upon Louis the Thirteenth.

Richelieu deemed Italy the vulnerable point of this great empire, forming the link and connection between the two courts and the two Houses of Vienna and of Madrid. The true and obvious policy, consequent upon this conviction, was to have made a close friend and ally of the House of Savoy, enable it by the conquest of the Milanese to interpose its force between the German and the Spaniard, and by such a guerdon secure the duke to French interests. This had been the aim of Richelieu in the first years of his power and his administration: but it failed. He had been overcome both abroad and at home, and being then obliged to deceive and betray the Duke of Savoy, the cardinal was never able to recover that prince's trust and confidence.

This it was that rendered Richelieu's efforts in Italy so nugatory, and which drove the queen-mother, always in the interests of Savoy, to make common cause with the Spanish and ultra-Roman party against the cardinal. The chief of these was Berulle, another cardinal, whom Marie of Medicis now pitted against Richelieu. He opposed all concessions to the Huguenots, all subsidies to Holland, all alliance with Sweden or the Protestant powers of the North, his object being to make France tread in the wake of Spain and Philip the Second's policy. Louis the Thirteenth had predilections so strong for all that was bigoted, that such counsellors had great influence with him. But, fortunately, Berulle took the part of Monsieur, the monarch's brother, and recommended the concession of all his demands. This flung the king into the arms of Riche-

lieu, who based his influence on fanning Louis's jealousy of all and of everyone, of his brother, of the Huguenots, of Rome, and of Spain.

Secure of the king, Richelieu, whilst he directed his chief efforts towards Italy, did not neglect Germany. He had sent Charnacé thither to incite the Duke of Bavaria and the Catholic league to resist the emperor. This they durst not as yet think of. The same agent tried to encourage the King of Denmark to continue the war, but, defeated and exhausted, that monarch succumbed, and signed a treaty at Lubeck on the 12th of May, 1569, yielding a portion even of his Danish dominions to the emperor. There remained no power that could be raised in resistance to Austria save Sweden, no commander that could be opposed to Wallenstein save its monarch, Gustavus Adolphus. He had been engaged in hostilities with Poland, which both belligerents were eager to terminate, the King of Sweden already fearing the imperial ascendency, and having aided to defend Stralsund, the last and sole spot of German soil that resisted the arms of Wallenstein. Gustavus' envoys having been treated with contumely and driven out of Lubeck, the Swedish monarch was desirous of measuring swords with the celebrated imperialists, Wallenstein and Tilly.

The Protestant princes of Germany, oppressed by the arms of Austria, and threatened with the spoliation of all their ecclesiastical property, secretly implored his aid, promising all, and even more, than they could give, the crown of the empire not excepted. But Gustavus, aware of the cost and difficulty of the war, hesitated till he obtained from Richelieu the promise of 400,000 crowns annually to enable him to invade Germany with an army of 40,000 men.* The salutary

* Mercure Français, t. xvi., contains king's and Richelieu's letters to Gustavus.

CHAP. XXIX.

intervention of Gustavus Adolphus in Germany could and did only take place in 1631. And in the meantime the two courts of Madrid and Vienna, perceiving the determined hostility of the French minister, resolved to unite their forces, in order to expel him and his partisans from Italy. German troops occupied the Valteline. An Austrian army under Colalto, one of Wallenstein's lieutenants, marched to invest Mantua, whilst the command of Milan and the task of reducing the Montserrat and its capital, Casale, was given to Spain's best general, Spinola. Richelieu was not slow to accept the challenge. In November, 1629, the king caused him by letters patent to be declared Prime Minister. In December he was nominated lieutenant-general, and representative of the king in Italy. So universal was his jealousy and mistrust, that the cardinal would not commit the conduct of armies to any officer, whatever his skill and courage, Bassompierre, Crequy, and Schomberg being provided with subordinate commands. Such petulant and independent officers as Thoiras Richelieu quarrelled with immediately; he could no more bear the idea of a political rival or a successful general, than Louis could to see greatness, independence, or renown in his brother. One cause, no doubt, of Louis' continued favour to the cardinal was, that he could scarcely be obfuscated by the military renown of a churchman.

In the last days of 1629 Richelieu set out for the Alps. He was met at Lyons by a young diplomatic agent from the Pope, named Giulio Mazarini, who sought to avert Richelieu's warlike intentions and incline him to a truce.* Mazarini, no doubt, succeeded somewhat in cooling Richelieu's ardour, for the cardinal did not pass the Alps or advance to Susa till the first days of March. He had summoned the Duke of Savoy

* By no writer are the circumstances of this war more ably and clearly depicted than by M. Cousin in his "Jeunesse de Mazarin."

to fulfil the terms of the treaty of 1628, to aid in liberating Casale, and to facilitate the march of French succours. The duke, in reply, mustered a large force at Veillane, between Susa and Turin, and, summoning Spinola to his assistance, prepared to fall upon the army of Richelieu, and overwhelm it in its advance to Turin and the Montserrat. Mazarini warned Richelieu of the trap that was laid for him, and the latter, to escape an unequal combat, and at the same time be avenged of the Duke of Savoy, turned aside, laid siege to Pignerol, one of the chief fortresses of Savoy towards the Alps, and carried it on the 31st of March, ere succours could be brought to save it.

If Mazarini's object had been to prevent the French from pushing their advantages in Italy, he was the contrary of successful, since his interference first gave them Pignerol, and, subsequently, the Spaniards, not listening to peace, French troops were poured over the Alps; De la Force took possession of Chiavenna, and the Duc de Montmorenci and D'Effiat attacked the forces of Savoy at Veillane on the 10th of July, and completely defeated them. Had Richelieu done as much at first he might have saved Mantua, which surrendered to the imperialists on the 17th of the same month. The victory of Veillane did not even relieve Casale. The Montserrat, a conglomeration of wooded hills, defended on the north by the Po, is one of the most difficult countries through which an army can be marched. The plague, too, raged at the time through Piedmont, and attacked the French; whilst Richelieu, distracted on one side by the inactivity of the army, and on the other by the hostile cabals which surrounded Louis the Thirteenth, capricious in taste and weak in health, was unable to retain his composure. When Mazarini came to see him, Richelieu assailed the Papal diplomatist with a torrent of abuse, whilst traversing the apartment with long strides and dashing

CHAP. XXIX.

his cardinal's hat to the ground. He complained that it was owing to the astute representations and promises of Mazarini that he had been first stopped at Lyons; and that, ever since, the advance of his army had been obstructed and delayed, until Mantua had fallen and Casale was about to capitulate. Mazarini excused himself to the utmost of his power against the too just reproaches; and, as he looked probably for future fortune and employ rather at the hands of Richelieu than from the Papal court, he promised to do his best to prevent by an accommodation the surrender of Casale.

What ensued is a striking exemplification of how completely military spirit and events, and, by consequence, political fortune itself, was subjected in those days to the intrigues and wills of ecclesiastics. The French, however wasted by disease, were still rallied by Marshal Schomberg, and, under his command, penetrated within view of Casale. The Spanish army, upwards of 30,000, under the Marquis of Santa Croce (Spinola had died during the siege), was encamped before the town, and was superior in numbers to the French. A battle seemed inevitable, nay desirable, to decide the fate of Italy. But the ever active Mazarini was there with powers from the new Duke of Savoy, who had just succeeded to his brother, powers from Richelieu, and the same from the Pope, whilst he succeeded in sowing mistrust and differences between the imperialists and Spaniards. Day after day Mazarini spent in flying from one army to another, but neither side would give in; and the French were actually marching to the attack when Mazarini extorted from the Spanish commander the permission to treat. He no sooner obtained it than, flinging himself on a horse, and snatching the cross of the legate from its bearer, he galloped towards the advancing French, crying, "Peace, peace!" At no little risk, he thus prevented the engagement, and succeeded in concluding a truce, on the condition of the Spanish

troops occupying the town, whilst the citadel still remained in the possession of the French under Thoiras.* It was neither in the field nor in the cabinets of Italy that the fate of that country was to be decided, but in a German diet at Ratisbon, where another ecclesiastical agent, the Capucin monk, Joseph, was as busy and as influential as Mazarini.

It is remarkable how the progress of monarchs in the acquisition of civil and religious despotism, so complete in the south of Europe, and so triumphant even as far as the Scheldt and the Maine, still met with a marvellous and what to some might appear a miraculous check as soon as it approached the north. The arms of Ferdinand the Second and his ruthless generals had been fully as successful over the German Protestants as those of Richelieu had been over the French Huguenots. Princes and aristocracy beyond the Rhine had been humbled before the throne as much as the French. Not merely the Palatine, but the Duke of Mecklenberg, were deprived of their estates at the bidding of the emperor; and the Protestant north was so completely at his feet, that he issued an edict ordering the restitution to the Catholics of the church property of countries where not a single Catholic remained.

The German emperor, however, had not those foundations laid for despotism which existed in Spain and France. The very corner-stone was wanting—the hereditary right of succession to the crown. Ferdinand, who had gone so far, shrank from going the whole length to despotic power; not that he had constitutional scruples or respect for others' rights, but that he entertained a superstitious belief of his being heaven-ordained to restore Catholic and despotic power. Believing that Divine providence had undertaken to do all for him, he neglected to take the worldly steps absolutely neces-

* MS. Life of Mazarini discovered at Turin, and published in *Revista Cotemporanea* of November, 1855. Memoirs of De Pontis, &c.

CHAP. XXIX.

sary for success. Instead of proclaiming his son his heir, which in the hour of his triumph none could have disputed, he resolved to pursue the traditional and legal course of summoning the electors to a diet, in order to the nomination of a king of the Romans.*

This was giving back to the elector princes the power of which the emperor had deprived them. He was complete master of Germany by means of a numerous army, more than 100,000 strong, which, under Wallenstein, defied every foreign and domestic foe, and levied itself the provisions and contributions which supported it. Confident in his power and in his mission, the emperor summoned a diet at the only time—the only year, perhaps, of his reign—in which it could have indulged in a thought of opposition. At any period previous, the Catholic and Protestant electors were so jealous of each other, and the Lutherans, at the same time, so abhorrent of the Calvinists, that no common action against the imperial power could have been concerted; whilst, had the assembly been deferred to a later period, the King of Sweden would have come south in arms, and compelled the Catholics, at least, to rally to Ferdinand. But in 1630, when the latter summoned the Diet of Ratisbon, the King of Sweden was indeed threatening war; but no one deemed that a prince of such insignificant power could accomplish more than the King of Denmark had done. The Catholics were in no apprehension of him. The Protestant princes were crushed by the licence and the ravages of Wallenstein's army, which had literally eaten up Brandenburg and Saxony. The Catholic princes, too, began to perceive that they had committed the same fault as the Catholic aristocracy and grandees in France, who, by aiding the crown to crush the Huguenot nobility, had merely contributed to the annihilation of the power and pri-

* Menzel, Neuere Geschichte der Deutschen, vol. vii. chap. xv.

vileges of the aristocracy altogether as a caste. When the last of the Huguenot nobles, Rohan and Soubise, were crushed, there remained for the French nobles, whether Catholic or Protestant, but to yoke themselves alike to the car of the all-powerful cardinal.

"When the emperor, therefore, opened the diet, he found the Duke of Bavaria, the chief of the Catholic princes, as indignant and as difficult to treat with as the envoys of Brandenburg or Saxony, of which the electors absented themselves, saying Wallenstein had not left them wherewith to pay their travelling expenses. The diet soon made it known to the emperor that, if he wished to have his son elected Emperor of the Romans, he must begin by dismissing Wallenstein, disbanding his army, ordering the Spanish troops to quit Germany, and grant fair terms and a restoration of rights to the Protestant princes. Strange to relate, the imperious emperor acquiesced; he dismissed Wallenstein, disbanded his army, offered such terms of peace to France, and such mitigation of his severity towards Protestants, even the Palatine, as the Catholic powers should advise, and demanded, in return, the election of his son to be King of the Romans.

There was no one more utterly astounded and perplexed at this unexpected revolution than the French envoys, the Capuchin, Père Joseph, and Brulart. They had come to Ratisbon ostensibly with the mission of begging the emperor not to interfere in Italian politics, by expelling the House of Gonzaga from Mantua. Their real aim was to urge the electors, especially the Catholic ones, to mistrust the emperor, and refuse the election of an Austrian prince to be the King of the Romans. The emperor's blandness defeated this latter design: and the Catholic electors, finding that they had in this gone contrary to French wishes, sought to make amends by compelling the emperor to promise the restoration of the Gonzagas

CHAP. XXIX.

in Mantua, with peace for Italy. To this, too, the emperor consented. He agreed to sign a treaty of peace with France, not only with regard to Italy, but to all countries. And a clause was inserted, stipulating that neither France nor Austria should afford succour to the enemies of each other. This was abandoning the King of Sweden, which the Père Joseph must have well known to be contrary to the designs, and interrupting all the negotiations of Richelieu. The treaty of Ratisbon, though it really left the emperor at the mercy of the electors, displays him also a complete master of Germany by virtue of the accord with them —not only master, but with the succession secured to his son. Yet, if the Père Joseph declined to sign the treaty, he must, breaking with the emperor, break also with these electors, even with the Protestants, who had in this peace, by withdrawing all countenance and encouragement from the King of Sweden, sought to put an end to his enterprise altogether. Never were negotiators so nonplussed. In the end they signed the treaty (October, 1630), although it left the Duke of Mantua at the mercy of the emperor, and patched up the affairs of Italy in a manner little to the honour of France, and sent it to Richelieu with a world of excuses—one of which was, that they had learnt the dangerous illness of the king, and feared the probable substitution of other influence for that of the cardinal in court and government, and the serious results that must ensue to the monarchy were the treaty of Ratisbon refused.*

The French negotiators in Germany might indeed have been well alarmed by the tidings which reached them from France. Towards the close of September the king, who, though always delighted with the excitement of camps and armies, generally caught from

* Mémoires de Richelieu; also his Lettres, end of tom. iii. Mercure Français.

thence the seeds of fever, was taken ill at Lyons. The immediate cause of his fever was this time of the most serious kind, an abscess having formed in his intestines. For a week he lay in a declining, and at last in a hopeless state; so much so, that Monsieur, whom Richelieu had tempted back from Lorraine with the appanage of Orleans and Blois, but who was by no means reconciled to the minister, conceived almost certain hopes of succeeding to the crown. The courtiers, with very few exceptions, looked wistfully for the moment which would allow them to take vengeance upon the cardinal. Not the least ardent amongst these were the two queens, who tended the bed of the apparently dying monarch. Unexpectedly for all, Louis the Thirteenth recovered. His abscess burst, and in October he was convalescent. But the queens did not abandon their hopes of overthrowing Richelieu; the convalescent monarch being most grateful for their attention to him in his illness. Marie de Medicis was indignant, not only that Pignerol should have been taken from her son-in-law, but even the hereditary duchy of Savoy conquered and occupied by the French. She was, at the same time, able to show the cardinal's policy as completely unsuccessful. Mantua had been captured, Casale in immense danger of sharing the same fate; the cardinal's diplomacy bearing as little fruit in Germany as in Spain. These considerations had most influence with the king, who prized his minister solely for his able and triumphant policy, Richelieu's manners being overbearing and his character intractable. Sickly in body and weak in temperament, the great minister could enjoy none of the pleasures of that luxurious age. He was neither avaricious nor amorous. The story of his having paid his addresses to Queen Anne seems to have small foundation. And whilst he had nothing in common with the gallants of the day, he had as little with the saintly or the bigot churchmen. He stood alone,

CHAP. XXIX.

intent on the duties of his administration, upon his wars and his negotiations. He had not yet conceived the fancy of enacting the literary patron; and though he employed gazetteers, he was too deeply engaged in playing the swordsman's part to stoop to that of the penman. He was solitary in the brilliant court, without a friend, and at the time of his failure without an argument to plead even for indulgence with the king. Louis, therefore, at Lyons, promised the queens that he would dismiss their foe. He only besought them to await his recovery and return to Paris, as well as the termination of the Italian war.

In the interval, fortune returned to the relief of Richelieu. Schomberg's advance and Mazarini's interference had saved Casale at least from ignominious surrender. The cardinal also pointed out the necessity of objecting to and receding from the more unfavourable provisions of the treaty of Ratisbon, whilst accepting its main stipulations. The king stood thus in positive need of Richelieu's experience to conduct the profound and difficult negotiation. He felt that after all he was best in the cardinal's hands, and that to dismiss him would merely create confusion.

The queen-mother listened with impatience to what she considered the weakness and fickleness of her son as they journeyed to Paris, and merely replied by holding him to his word. Her recommendation was to accept the treaty of Ratisbon, thus restore peace in Germany and Italy, and enable the monarch to dispense with the diplomatic and military talents of the cardinal. Had the court or the administration a politician of even moderate capacity, one who could pretend to take Richelieu's place, the latter might have been sacrificed. But the queen-mother had merely the Marillacs to propose, one already keeper of the seals, the other a marshal—men manifestly incapable of supplying the place of him whom it was proposed to supersede. The first step would have

been to accept the treaty of Ratisbon, from which the king shrank. Louis therefore had the strongest objections to this, and stated his opinion so determinately, that his mother was fain to give way, and acquiesce in the temporary maintenance of the cardinal's authority. To signify her reconciliation, she promised to receive again into her family and favour, Madame de Combalet, Richelieu's niece, whom she had but recently expelled from both. Marie de Medicis thus promised more than her temper would allow her to perform, for when Madame de Combalet presented herself before the queen, in the king's presence, Marie, instead of even coldly welcoming, overwhelmed her with a torrent of abuse. After this scene, Louis repaired to his mother's apartments for a final explanation, warning, as it would appear, the cardinal to present himself. Richelieu found the door closed, but, knowing of a back entrance, he took advantage of it, and made his appearance at the moment when the king and his mother were in the height of altercation on the subject of his retention or disgrace. He endeavoured to seize the opportunity to defend his cause; but the queen's anger was even more excited at his intervention. She called him a traitor, declared that she would never sit in the council at which he was present, and commanded the king to choose definitively between his mother and his valet. Unable to appease or resist her passion, Louis fled from it, and his first resolve, however reluctantly taken, was still that of sacrificing the cardinal. In obedience to Marie's wishes, he wrote a despatch to the army of Italy, by which he bade the cardinal's friends, La Force and Schomberg, hand over the command to Marshal Marillac.* Louis withdrew to Versailles, sending word to the keeper of the seals, Marillac, to follow him thither, no doubt with the intention of completing the arrange-

* The letter in Correspondence de la Force, t. iii. p. 329.

CHAP. XXIX.

ment and appointments necessary upon the fall of Richelieu.

The cardinal ordered his carriage to be got ready, and made all preparations for setting forth to Havre. He would be more in safety, he thought, in some town of his naval command. His friend, the Cardinal de la Valette, dissuaded him from any precipitate departure, and a message soon arrived from Versailles. The king had withdrawn thither with a young companion, the future Duke of St. Simon, to whom he frankly communicated his regret at being obliged to part with the cardinal. St. Simon warned the latter of the king's state of mind, and Richelieu hastened to take advantage of it, whilst Keeper Marillac, in the fulness of his fortune, had gone to enjoy it at one of his own country houses instead of repairing to Versailles.

On the evening of the 11th of November, 1630, on the morning of which Louis had written the letter changing the command of the army, Richelieu was welcomed by the monarch to Versailles, confirmed in his office, and retained to sleep in a chamber under that of the king. Next day the seals were taken from Marillac, a courier despatched to Schomberg, with orders to arrest the marshal, his brother. The Duke of Montmorency, who had offered Richelieu protection in his supposed disgrace, was made a marshal, and all those who showed attention to him were rewarded. Such was what in French history is called the Day of Dupes.*

Louis, in taking the decision that was certainly best for his government, hoped to force reconciliation upon the different parties which disputed his power. He had no command, however, over the passions even of those most dependent upon him. Richelieu he could

* The Journal, which Richelieu kept of these events, published in Archives Curieuses, 2nd ser. t. v. The memoirs of St. Simon, as well as those of his contemporaries, in the collections Michaud and Petitot.

not inspire with generosity or mercy. The queen-mother, when she consented to sit once more at the council table with the cardinal, at least expected lenience to be shown to her confidants; but the chief of them, the keeper of the seals, Marillac, was kept in close arrest, likewise his brother, the marshal. As the circumstances of the late plot became more and more disclosed to the cardinal, he perceived that those engaged in it aimed at no less than his life, and that, had he not fortunately regained the favour of the king, or should chance ever deprive him of Louis' support, he might look for the worst. This rendered him merciless; and whilst he resolved to spare no pains for conciliating those more lofty foes whom he was compelled to respect, he was equally determined to show no mercy to others. To the two persons who had influence over Monsieur, and possessed his confidence, the cardinal offered the largest bribes, no less than ducal coronets and cardinals' hats. It was in vain. The king's brother defied Richelieu in his own palace, and withdrew from court. The queen-mother was as irreconcilable, so that Louis had again to choose which he should definitively part and quarrel with. He once more decided for the cardinal, lured his mother to Compiègne, and then quitted that palace suddenly with Richelieu, leaving a strong guard in the chateau, with orders not to let Marie de Medicis depart or return to Paris (Feb. 22). Troops were at the same time marched against Monsieur, who was arming and vapouring in Orleans, and the guards being after a time adroitly withdrawn from Compiègne, Monsieur and his mother followed each the same counsel, and fled, the one into Franche Comté, the other into Flanders.

Aware of the obloquy that such a breach between the king, his mother, and brother must excite, Richelieu appealed to the public as well as to parliament in a declaration, stating the cause of quarrel, and accusing

CHAP. XXIX.

the fugitive prince of treason.* Monsieur found pens to answer it, and the judicial body, taking his part against the cardinal, refused to register the prince's condemnation, till they were forced to do so by the king in person. Not only did the parliament join Richelieu's enemies, but the chief names of court and noblesse opposed him in the same sentiments. When Monsieur fled, the Duc de Bellegarde, governor of Burgundy, accompanied him. Marshal Bassompierre it was thought necessary to send to the Bastille. The Dukes of Elbœuf and Guise, who governed Picardy and Provence, were equally denounced. The latter was a declared enemy of Richelieu, who never showed favour or fairness to the house of Lorraine. The Count of Moret, a son of Henry the Fourth, also fled the kingdom. Even Montmorency was shaken, on seeing that the cardinal was driving from the court almost every man of birth or independence.

What causes most surprise in the events of this epoch is, not so much the hatred which the remaining chiefs of the aristocracy bore to Richelieu, as the complete failure or defeat, which followed so closely the outbreak of their rebellion. The truth is, that the governors of the several provinces of Burgundy and the south counted upon energetic support from the population, which in the hour of peril failed them. Yet the greatest discontent prevailed. Richelieu, with his reckless despotism, had attempted to cancel the privileges of every province, to reduce Catholics as well as Protestants to mere ciphers. In Burgundy, in Dauphiné, in Provence and in Languedoc, orders were issued abolishing the estates, and replacing them, as far as fiscal attributes went, by *esleus*, that is, by officers of the central government. These orders with respect

* Balzac employed his pen on this occasion on behalf of Richelieu. See Mercure Français, MSS. Fontanieu, 481, 482; Letter of Richelieu to La Mothe, MS. Colbert, 487; and the memoirs of the time.

to Dauphiné were fully carried out. Burgundy had a complete representative system. After its estates had sate their month, a permanent council sate till the following year to see to the execution of their fiscal edicts. Richelieu, especially after the flight of the Governor Bellegarde, sought to abolish this old constitution. An insurrection was the consequence, put down indeed, but as Burgundy adjoined the foreign and hostile provinces of Franche Comté and Lorraine, severity was deemed unwise, and Burgundy was allowed, on the payment of a large sum, to preserve its estates.*

Richelieu in 1630 issued similar decrees for the abolition of the estates of Provence. It produced a revolution there too, in which the ultra-Catholic parliament of Aix took the lead. The cardinal sent the Prince of Condé with an army to supersede the Duke of Guise as governor, and put down Provence. But as he was to succeed to the government, he recommended Condé not to press the Provençals too hard. They were allowed to hold assemblies of procureurs of municipalities, and even recovered their estates in 1638, on payment of a million and a half of livres. As Languedoc, from its extent, which stretched from Valence to Montauban, and was bathed by the Rhone and Mediterranean to the foot of the Pyrenees, was the most important of the southern provinces, so were its estates. The governor, especially when assured of the adherence of this assembly, was almost a king, disposing of a large revenue independent of the crown. For upwards of half a century the Montmorencies had held this post, as often to thwart as to support the crown. On the reduction of the Huguenots in 1639, Louis the Thirteenth had introduced the *esleus*, or fiscal officers appointed by the crown, and redistributed the judicial power with a similar aim. The estates remonstrated and were sus-

* Mercure Français, tom. xvii. Caillet, Administration en France sous Richelieu, Aubery, and cotemporary Memoirs.

CHAP. XXIX.

pended. Deep and far-spread as was thus the discontent of all classes and all provinces with Richelieu in 1630—for Britanny and Normandy were scarcely more respected than the others—still there was no concert between the scattered malcontents, and when Monsieur set the example of flight, Bellegarde and Guise each left their governments without resistance. Richelieu caused them to be condemned to death as *contumaces* and their property to be confiscated. The Prince of Condé remained true to the king and cardinal, and his adherence with the body of troops committed to him held the south from breaking out into rebellion for at least that year.*

In the meantime, Richelieu's long-baffled efforts to raise up effectual resistance to the emperor had been at length crowned with success. When the Capuchin Joseph signed the treaty of Ratisbon, so unfavourable, so destructive of the cardinal's aim, fortune accomplished what the negotiators failed in. Wallenstein and the greater part of the imperial army dismissed, the Bavarian Tilly took the command of the rest, and laid siege to Magdeburg, whilst the Swedish king, having landed in Pomerania, was mustering sufficient force and supplies to meet him. A stubborn resistance was expected from Magdeburg, but an imperial party within its walls had weakened the powers of defence; and Tilly, carrying Magdeburg by assault, annihilated the population of that great Protestant city, with such ruthless barbarism and indiscriminate slaughter as aroused every Protestant heart in Germany to vengeance.

Magdeburg was captured and destroyed in May, 1631. In the September following, Gustavus came up with the captor and massacrer of Magdeburg in the vicinity of Leipzig. Unlike the poddering of French, Spanish, and Italian generals and soldiers at that epoch,

* Hist. du Languedoc.

the Swedish monarch brought his enemy to battle, and the result was the complete defeat of Tilly and the Catholic army, which left 7000 dead and 5000 captive on the field, the rest of the 40,000 flying with such precipitation that a great number of them perished by the hands of peasantry whom they had exasperated. Richelieu, however relieved by the defeat of the emperor, was now alarmed at the military ascendency of the King of Sweden, as well as by the prostration of the Duke of Bavaria and the Catholic League of Germany. He sought to procure a position of neutrality for the latter, and so divert the arms of Gustavus exclusively against the emperor. Vain attempt—the true division of Germany was into Protestant and Catholic, and Richelieu could not stop the progress of Gustavus, who, reinforced by some 7000 English under the Marquis of Hamilton, followed up his victory, and defeated Tilly once more at the confluence of the Lech and Danube, which left Munich open to the northern conqueror.

Richelieu, in the memoirs which he dictated or revised, affects the greatest solicitude for the Duke of Bavaria and the Catholic cause. In reality, he was well pleased to see both parties in Germany occupy and weaken and neutralise each other, which left open to him the opportunity of advancing stealthily French conquest and ascendency eastwards towards the Rhine.* The folly of the Duke of Lorraine in harbouring the king's brother, and joining his mother's intrigues with Spain to oppose the cardinal, gave the latter a fair pretext. Mustering an army, Richelieu and the king proceeded to Metz in the last months of 1631, one of their first acts being the capture of the fortress of Moyenvic, which soon brought the duke to complete submission,

* Richelieu's real impartiality is pretty well shown by his subsidy of 500,000 livres to Gustavus Adolphus, and 300,000 to his antagonist the Duke of Bavaria in the same year (1632).

CHAP. XXIX.

expressed in the treaty of Vic (Jan. 1632), by which he ceded Marsal, the principal of his fortresses on the side of Germany. Richelieu himself has disclosed what were his views in this direction. They were nothing less than to extend ultimately French conquest, and in the meantime French influence, to the Rhine, making the King of France protector of the ecclesiastical electorates along that river, master of Philipsburg and Coblentz, and by these means dominant over the country from Metz to the Rhine, all those who possessed estates there necessarily putting themselves under the protection of France. The Count of Nassau himself offered Homburg. This was, indeed, the great and most successful scheme of Richelieu's administration, terminating in the subjection of Lorraine and the acquisition of Alsace, although the latter was filched rather than conquered, whilst the contending factions in Germany were engaged in fierce contest with each other.

Richelieu never conceived a plan, or entered upon a campaign for the furtherance of the national interests, in which he was not interrupted by the forthbreak of domestic intrigues. The Huguenots first, then rival courtiers rallying round the king's brother, or his mother, withstood him. Now not only Monsieur and the queen-mother and both branches of the House of Austria showed their hostility, but the provinces of the south were excited by the destruction of their local privileges, and alarmed at the progress of that despotism which Richelieu was rolling over those extremities of the kingdom which had not hitherto undergone it. What gave importance to this revolt in 1632 was, that Henry, Duc de Montmorenci, took the lead. He had exercised almost sovereignty in Languedoc, "having levied by his own orders," says Richelieu, "upwards of 22,000,000 of livres during the preceding twelve years." The substitution of royal taxgatherers for those which acted under the authority of the estates and the

governor, was dethronement to Montmorency, who was not without other grievances.

His resentment, as well as that of the queen and of Gaston, was much increased against the cardinal, by a very cruel act, perpetrated by that minister in the present year. Maréchal Marillac had been kept in close imprisonment, no proofs of treason or of any capital offence being found against him. This did not stop Richelieu, who appointed judges to try him for peculation; for, in fact, making money of his military command, as was but too customary. The first judges appointed refused to condemn him. But Richelieu found others; nay, brought court and criminal to his private residence at Ruel to intimidate the former and secure the condemnation of the latter. Under such pressure Maréchal Marillac was condemned for peculation to be beheaded, though "the proofs were not sufficient to whip a valet. But an angel," declared the maréchal, "could not have escaped such a tribunal." Not only was he condemned, but executed (May 10, 1632), the victim most manifestly of the cardinal's private vengeance.*

Montmorency had shared Marillac's dislike and disapproval of the cardinal's military plans in Italy. They had joined in representing the relief of Casale, which Schomberg afterwards effected, as impossible; and neither the military nor the fiscal resources of Languedoc were employed for the king's service in the Italian campaign with the fulness and loyalty due. These faults were more aggravated than redeemed in the cardinal's eyes by the gallantry and generalship shown by Montmorency at Veillane—a victory which had won Saluzzo for the French. The duke was the last of the

* Richelieu says Marillac's condemnation was rather for the mass of his evil deeds than for any particular one. Journal, p. 47. For the end of Marillac see Mém. de Pontis. His Procés (printed) will be found in Fontanieu, 481.

CHAP. XXIX.

grands seigneurs who walked on a par with royalty, serving it only so far as it suited their dignity and interests; and it was no doubt with satisfaction that Richelieu first heard of Montmorency's revolt, as affording a just pretext for humbling the last of the feudal lords.

When Gaston craved aid from the Spaniards to enable him to invade France and dethrone the cardinal, they recommended him to get possession of a seaport, in which he might be reinforced and supported. Calais* was first pitched on; but Richelieu's vigilance discovering the plot, he and the king proceeded thither, and rendered the town secure against treason or surprise. Gaston was then advised to direct his efforts towards the south, where Toulon might be seized and opened to the Spanish galleys.† Montmorency was sounded, and it appeared to him that, with the king's brother in the camp, the secret support of Spain, the general discontent caused by the suppression of the estates, and the feasibility of once more stirring up Huguenot resistance, he could be able to withstand the royal forces, and put an end to the cardinal's despotism.

Montmorency erred in his calculations. In the first place, the Huguenots had been so many times betrayed by the great princes and nobles, who excited them to revolt for their own purposes, and who discarded them for the same, that they now refused, and preferred abiding by those promises of tolerance made to them at the end of the last war. Montmorency and Monsieur were thus unable to make a stand in Nismes or Montpellier, or any of the old Protestant strongholds. They tried to hold Beaucaire and failed, being driven from East

* The project of seizing Calais was probably in connexion with England. Since 1631 the Spanish court had made overtures to that of Charles for an alliance against the Dutch and French, which the English government was most willing to engage in, if Spain and the emperor would promise to restore the young Palatine. See Correspondence of Windebank with Hopton and Clarendon. State Papers.

† Journal de Richelieu, p. 146.

CHAP. XXIX.

Languedoc by no other general than the Marquis De la Force, that last of the Huguenot nobles, who now commanded the king's army on the Rhone. It was only in the south-western corner of Languedoc, adjoining Spain, that Montmorency was able to make a stand. He had indeed persuaded the estates convoked at Pezenas to throw off the royal authority and proclaim their own. But this was not followed by any general adherence of the Languedocians, rural or urban; and Montmorency and the prince were encountered at Castelnaudary by Marshal Schomberg (Sept. 7, 1632). They had but 2000 infantry, 3000 cavalry, and many volunteer nobles. Schomberg's force was much inferior, and it would probably have been defeated if encountered on open ground. But there were ditches and entrenchments, which exposed Montmorency's horse to the fire of cannon, and left it nothing to charge upon. The duke, however, led his cavalry idly against a few of the enemy. At the head of about a hundred, he rode up to Schomberg's camp, by the fire from which his horse was killed, and his companions put to flight. Montmorency, sword in hand, then fought his way into the camp, where he was taken. It was impossible to display greater rashness or more want of generalship.* Schomberg confined his attention to securing his prisoner, whose guard he could not entrust to Languedocians, as all wept at the mere sight of Montmorency in captivity. As to Monsieur, after a few idle efforts to recover his captive friend he confessed his defeat, and made his submission without stipulating the safety of the duke. Yet the offer of sparing the latter was made to the prince on the condition of his giving up his favourite, Puy Laurens.

It would be difficult to select anything more cold-blooded than the reasons which Richelieu himself

* Relation de Castelnaudari (printed). Schomberg's Despatch. See Fontanieu, 481–2.

CHAP. XXIX.

details at length, and side by side, for and against the execution of Montmorency. To meet the reproaches of private vengeance, he enumerates all the grounds of personal friendship and amity existing between them. Considerations of justice or of mercy had no weight with him whatever; he merely balances the political results of sparing or slaying—the former fraught with inconvenience and peril, the latter henceforth depriving the king's wayward brother of the power of commanding a single friend after the base sacrifice of Montmorency. The last argument evidently outweighed all others. The great noble's past loyalty, his gallantry and success in the king's service, his ancient family, of which he was, as yet a young man, the last scion, the universal affection borne him—all were but feathers in the balance against what Richelieu considered of political weight; and Montmorency's head was struck off by the executioner, October 1632, inside the gates of the palace of Toulouse, the populace being afterwards admitted to contemplate the remains of the fallen chief. Whilst thus braving the hatred of the Languedocians, Richelieu sought to conciliate the non-noble classes. He not only swept away the immunities of the aristocracy, and razed their fortifications and castles, but he restored to the province its estates, as a reward for not having supported Montmorency.*

Six weeks after the combat of Castelnaudary, took place the battle of Lutzen, in which Gustavus Adolphus perished. The loss, though compensated somewhat by the defeat of the imperialists, at the same time sorely embarrassed Richelieu. The Duke of Bavaria and the Catholic League had been crushed, and there remained but the Swedes and German Protestants to make head against the emperor. In this, indeed, they succeeded, less by the support of France at first, than by the energy and talents of Oxenstiern, the Swedish chan-

* Caillet, Administration in France.

cellor, and the weakness which soon after befel the emperor, from the necessity of getting rid of Wallenstein. Oxenstiern was, however, no general. Bernard of Saxe Weimar came to fill that place for the Protestants, but his inferiority to the great Gustavus was sufficiently shown in the battle of Nordlingen, in which he was defeated. (September 6th, 1634.)

Long before this disaster, Richelieu had prepared for such an event by finally crushing Lorraine*, driving its duke into exile, imprisoning his brother, the cardinal, in whose favour he had abdicated, and then posting a French army on the borders of Alsace. Immediately after the defeat of Bernard, Oxenstiern despatched envoys to France, offering all the towns of Alsace, and even those to the right bank of the Rhine, such as Brisach and Philipsburg, if that court would at once declare war upon Austria and march to the defence of German independence.† Richelieu did not hesitate, and ere the close of the year Alsace was occupied, and the French standard floated over the Rhine. This was no longer covert, but open war with the House of Austria. In order to deprive the enemy of a dangerous ally, Monsieur was once more enticed to return and be reconciled to the king. (October 1634.)

His submission was obtained, as usual, through his dominant favourite for the moment, Puy Laurens, who was created a duke, and given a relative of the cardinal in marriage.‡ The new duke, nevertheless, kept Monsieur firm in the determination not to repudiate his wife, sister to the Duke of Lorraine—an object, for which though the court and Richelieu exerted all their efforts, they never obtained. The new duke, Puy Laurens, was consigned to prison. Monsieur, however, appointed

* Richelieu caused seventeen castles and fortresses in Lorraine to be dismantled. Mercure Français, vol. xx.

† Oxenstiern's Instructions, Sattler, Geschichte Würtembergs, vol. vii.

‡ For the submission of Monsieur and treaty with him, see Mémoires de Montresor, 1634.

CHAP. XXIX.

to be Governor of Auvergne, ceased to conspire, and Richelieu was now at liberty to support his arms upon the Rhine. It was not an easy task: Manheim and Heidelberg had to be defended against the victorious armies of Austria and Bavaria, whilst Alsace was invaded by the Duke of Lorraine. Philipsburg, delivered to the French by the Swedes in 1664, was taken by the imperialists in the January following; and Treves, garrisoned by French, was captured by the Spaniards with their ally, the elector, in it, who was carried off to lasting captivity. Such proofs of French and Swedish inefficiency induced the princes of Saxony and Brandenburg to conclude a separate peace with the emperor, who, taught by late reverses, waived his more arrogant pretensions. He agreed to leave the Lutheran princes in possession of the ecclesiastical property, which their church, appropriated, and, in fact, abandon the project of subduing and coercing the Protestant north.*

To counterbalance these successes of the House of Austria, Richelieu concluded a new alliance with Holland, promising what the Dutch principally desired, an open declaration of war against Spain. Potent Dutch and French armies were to meet at Luxemburg, and strike an important blow. Considerable delay, however, occurred in their accomplishing a junction; and although Marshals Chatillon and Brezé succeeded at first in defeating Prince Thomas of Savoy, who commanded the Spaniards at Avain, and also in capturing Tirlemont, still the rapine and licentiousness which the troops displayed in the sack of this town made the citizens of every other determine to die rather than surrender. Thus Louvaine was besieged in vain, the rest of the summer being passed in inaction; and, moreover, the French army being so far separated from its frontiers as to be unable to regain them—a fault that proved not to be without serious results.

* Menzel, Neuere Geschichte, vol. viii.

CHAP. XXIX.

Another army in the east, commanded by the Duc de la Force, and the Cardinal de la Valette, cooperating with Bernard de Saxe Weimar, did little more than pass the Rhine, offer battle, and repass it without any achievement of importance. This so disgusted the king with his new acquisition of Alsace, that he made it over to the Duke of Saxe Weimar, a prince without heirs certainly, on the condition of his defending it, and owning the authority of the French king in return for an annual payment of four millions of livres.* In the Valteline the French arms met with more signal, yet scarcely more profitable, success; whilst in Italy, where Richelieu threatened the conquest of Milan, Maréchal Crequy and the Duke of Savoy did no more than lay ineffectual siege to Valenza.

If the campaign of 1635 thus proved null for the French, that of the ensuing year was disastrous. It was commenced with ill-calculated greed by the Prince of Condé, who, as Governor of Burgundy, undertook to conquer the adjoining Spanish province of Franche Comté. Richelieu sent him his choice regiments for the enterprise. Yet even with these he could not capture Dole, whilst the cardinal infant and the imperial general, Piccolomini, seeing the northern frontier deprived, not only of the French northern army, which was in the far part of Holland, but of the regiments which had gone to the reduction of Franche Comté, poured over the frontier of Artois into Picardy, the capture of the fortresses of Capelle and Le Catelet in July giving the first notice of their advance (1636). This was followed by the reduction of Corbie and the passes of the Somme. The northern frontier was not only defended by an inefficient force but by an incapable commander, the Count of Soissons; and the fortresses being at the same time totally unprovided with

* Bernard was to be styled Landgrave of Alsace, and Bailli of Haguenau. Treaty in Aubery.

CHAP. XXIX.

means of defence, Richelieu's administration was severely censured, as one that grasped at remote and brilliant prizes, whilst neglecting the necessary but humble considerations of domestic safety. Soissons, with 12,000 men, retired to Compiègne whilst the Spaniards advanced to Noyon, exciting fears for the important towns of Amiens and St. Quentin.* The people of Paris itself, learning that the enemy was upon the Oise, were in the greatest consternation. The cruelty with which the population of captured cities were then treated filled every imagination; and the road to Orleans was soon crowded with fugitives, bringing off such valuables as were portative. So great a reverse had seldom befallen Richelieu, and it aroused the accumulated bitterness of popular hate. The cardinal faced it with courage, and proceeded alone in his carriage to the Hotel de Ville to claim succour of the city, which raised 6000 men with the funds to pay them, but showed its old spirit in proposing to look to the application of the money. At this the king was indignant, and told the profferers to mind their own business.†

Sufficient forces were soon mustered from Franche Comté and other provinces, the Prince of Condé coming to the aid of the Count of Soissons. The Duc de Longueville raised an army in Normandy, Monsieur brought 4000 men from Blois; Corbie was soon retaken (in September), and the Spaniards repelled within their frontier. The nature of the peril then changed for the cardinal, Soissons and Condé plotting with Monsieur to assassinate him: and the crime would have been perpetrated, but for want of courage in the latter to give the signal that had been agreed upon. In Italy similar fortune had marked the war, the French commencing by an advance to the Tessin, but ending by a retreat to Pignerol. The

* The correspondence in Aubey; Fontenay-Mareuil; Richelieu's Mémoires.

† Mémoires de Montglat, Brienne, Fontenay-Mareuil, &c.

most important event in this quarter was, however, the total loss of the Valteline to the French, the Duke of Rohan being left to his fate, without succour or resources, whilst the Spanish armies menaced Paris.

The war, in fact, had lost all energy and purpose. Begun for the sake of humbling the House of Austria, and saving North Germany from its grasp, this had been fully effected. The Emperor Ferdinand the Second had died in 1637, his son inheriting the milder policy of his later years, not the inveterate bigotry of his early ones. The war continued, indeed, from the extreme difficulty of reconciling and arranging so many and such divers interests. But its advantages continued to be on the side of the Swedes and the Protestants. In 1638 Bernard of Saxe Weimar defeated the imperialists at Rheinfeld. And as late as 1642 the Swedes, under Torstenson, were victorious in a third great battle on the plains of Leipzig. But negotiations were all the time in progress, and the great peace of the north and south, Protestant and Catholic, France and Germany, ripening. To Richelieu the chief concern was how far he could succeed in pushing the French frontier. Alsace had been entrusted to Bernard of Saxe Weimar, on the supposition that, being without heirs, France, which had constituted itself paymaster of his army, should preserve the command both of it and of the region which it occupied. So indeed it proved, but not without difficulty. Bernard felt as a German, and meditated a German principality, extending both sides of the Rhine. Dying prematurely in 1639, he left the succession to his brothers. The gallant son of the late Palatine hoped, from his rank, claims, and military reputation, to succeed Bernard in Alsace; and he might have done so, had not Richelieu arrested him on his journey and committed him to the fortress of Vincennes. Money and the want of competition

CHAP. XXIX.

secured the prize to Richelieu. He agreed to pay Bernard's army 700,000 crowns annually, in return for which they accepted the Duc de Longueville as general*, Alsace finally becoming French in consequence. Such was one of the important results of Richelieu's mingled efforts by diplomacy and war—a result only sealed in the time of his successor but fully achieved in his own.

Never did Italy more fully crave Richelieu's attention than in these years. The death of the Duke of Savoy, in 1637, opened at once fresh perils and fresh opportunities. Although the cardinal saw both, and gave directions to the French generals, his forces and anxieties were turned in another direction. At the time of the Duke of Savoy's death, the French general who commanded there, Marshal Crequy, wanted, of course, to grasp the government and the fortresses of the country in the name of the Duchess Dowager, a sister of Louis the Thirteenth. Naturally jealous of such overbearing conduct, and urged both by her favourite and her confessor, she looked to Spain, and hoped to follow the traditional policy of the House of Savoy, which had kept its independence by balancing one powerful neighbour against the other. By this she secured the enmity of both Richelieu and her brothers-in-law, the Savoy princes, one of whom was in the military service of Spain. The latter power took possession of Vercelli, the Cardinal de la Valette, who succeeded Crequy, the French commander, having neither forces nor ability to resist. The Savoy princes, 1639, seized Turin, and drove the duchess to take refuge in France. She was but coldly received by her brother, Louis the Thirteenth; and, in turn, but coldly trusted his friendship or his designs. Richelieu, however, was fortunate enough to find an able general to command in Piedmont. Count Harcourt, of the family of Lor-

* MSS. Dupuy, 541. October, 1639.

CHAP. XXIX.

raine, defeated the Spaniards in 1640, relieved Casale, recovered Turin, and at least restored French power and influence in North Italy to its wonted superiority.* He deserved the more praise, as but scant resources and troops were given him. These the cardinal now turned, not towards the Alps, but to the Flemish frontier. He had received too severe a lesson in 1637 by the advance of the Spaniards to the Oise not to feel the necessity of strengthening and extending the French frontier in this direction. In 1639 he revived his plan of four years previous, to make a gigantic effort against the Spanish Low Countries. Instead, however, of depending upon Dutch aid or lead, he set on foot three French armies, one of which was to invade Luxemburg, another Hainault, whilst the king led a third against Hesdin. Learning by experience that supplies were everything, Richelieu undertook himself the office of *Sur-Intendant des Vivres;* and his correspondence of the period is far more full of the details of the commissariat than of aught else. The plan of a campaign, based on the operations of three distinct armies, had its natural result. The imperial general, Piccolomini, fell upon one of them—that commanded by Feuquières—near Thionville, and completely defeated it, taking its general, artillery, and baggage. Richelieu redeemed the disaster somewhat by the capture of Hesdin. In the South, Condé undertook in the same summer to conquer Roussillon, but he met with no more success than he had done in Franche Comté. He began by capturing Salces, but the Spanish coming in force to besiege the French within it, and Condé marching to its relief, had his camp and army overwhelmed by one of those terrific *trombes*, or wind and waterspouts, which destroyed and scattered like sand his 20,000 men, leaving Salces to be retaken by the Spaniards.

In attacking Roussillon, Richelieu was little aware

* Memoir of Marshal du Plessis. Mercure Français.

CHAP. XXIX.

of the blow he was about to deal to the Spanish monarchy. Its late kings, Charles the Fifth and Philip the Second, had crushed the independence and annulled the privileges of the great provinces, Catalonia escaping from its general loyalty, as well as from its being considered a mere dependency upon Aragon. Catalonia retained its *fueros* less from the generosity than from the neglect of these monarchs. Their descendant found it necessary to repair to Barcelona to take an oath to respect the privileges of the province, and on this occasion he experienced a sturdy sort of obedience very different from that of the other Spanish provinces. In 1626 the King of Spain was obliged to fly from the turbulence of the Barcelonese. The Minister Olivarez especially was indignant at such frowardness, and only sought an opportunity to repress it. This was afforded by the attack of the French upon Roussillon, considered, though north of the Pyrenees, a part of Catalonia. The people of the province, however, responded loyally to the call of their monarch, and sent 20,000 men to oppose the French at Salces. Not more than 8000 of this army returned to their homes. Instead of showing gratitude, the Spanish government quartered an army on the Catalonians, which was altogether a breach of their *fueros*, and proceeded to levy a tax for supporting it. The Catalonians remonstrated and murmured; the general in command, Santa Colonna, represented that the tax was greater than the Catalonians could pay. The royal reply was, that he should enforce it, which could easily be done by making the soldiers in each district more numerous than the inhabitants. The result was an insurrection, which broke out in Barcelona on the 7th of June, 1640, and in which the whole province joined. The viceroy was slain in the tumult. And whilst the court of Madrid ordered the captain-general of Aragon, Los Velez, to march to put down the insurgents, they sent a deputa-

tion to Richelieu to take them under his protection. Los Velez had at first some success, and reduced Tortoso. Cambrils also fell into his hands, its garrison being unpitiably handed over to the executioner. Tarragona was then seized by the captain-general, who marched upon Barcelona. He was here, however, met by the troops and general which Richelieu had sent to its assistance, and the capital was saved. In their gratitude, the Catalonians transferred their allegiance to Louis the Thirteenth. Richelieu had recommended them to form a republic like the Dutch, thinking this would excite the energies of the people to suffice for their own defence. But Spaniards were not Hollanders; and Louis the Thirteenth, September 1641, accepted the title and power of Count of Barcelona, promising at the same time to respect the *fueros* of the province. In the following year the French followed up their successes in this quarter. The king himself came to Roussillon, the capital of which, Perpignan, surrendered in September, 1642. In the same month La Mothe Houdancourt, who commanded the French south of the Pyrenees, defeated the Spanish general Leganez, and maintained his position as Viceroy of Catalonia in despite of all the efforts of the court of Madrid.*

The arrogant rule of Olivarez drove Portugal into rebellion at the same time as Catalonia. The Spanish minister was indeed the counterpart of Richelieu, and had all the tyrannical principles of the French cardinal, without his sagacity and prudence. In the same month and year in which the Catalonians transferred their allegiance to Louis the Thirteenth, the Portuguese rehoisted their national banner under the Duke of Braganza, whom they chose for king. Thus was all the power of the Spanish monarchy required and

* Mémoires de Montglat, of Richelieu, Correspondance de Sourdis, Mercure Français, xxiii.

CHAP. XXIX.

exerted at home, opening to Richelieu greater facilities for fulfilling those schemes of conquest which he had long meditated. Not only had he secured Alsace and Lorraine—the latter province was, indeed, nominally restored to its duke, who repaired to Paris and made his submission—but he bound himself to serve France exclusively; and the possession of his fortresses enabled the French king to keep him to his agreement. Lorraine became, in fact, virtually French. In 1641 Richelieu completed this conquest by that of Artois, which was, indeed, a necessary acquisition; whilst the French frontier stretched for hundreds of leagues east, south, and west of Paris, Artois lying between Calais and Picardy, brought the hostile frontier close to the Somme, within a few hours of Abbeville and Amiens, and within two marches of the capital. The campaign of 1637 showed all the danger. In the summer of 1641, therefore, Richelieu, despatching two armies with the apparent design of attacking different places in the north, brought them together suddenly and unexpectedly before Arras, the principal town of Artois, on the 13th of June, 1640. The cardinal infant mustered an army of 20,000 men to relieve it, whilst O'Neil, who commanded the garrison, prepared for a stubborn defence. Like most sieges of the period, it was an affair of time and provisions. The Spaniards did not dare attack the entrenched camp of the united French armies; but they cut off the convoys, and on more than one occasion went near to reduce the besiegers to a greater degree of famine than the besieged. All the efforts of the cardinal infant were, however, in vain. The king and Richelieu from Amiens directed fresh supplies of provisions and of men; calling up even the army of Lorraine to secure the important capture. Arras was thus not only pressed by famine, but its ramparts being undermined, and the garrison incapable of resisting the assault that must follow the

explosion, the capital of Artois opened its gates on the 9th of August.

This was the most important of the conquests of Richelieu. Artois, Lorraine, Alsace, and Roussillon were words sufficient to inscribe upon his tomb in order to entitle him to the claim of gratitude from the monarch, and admiration from the French themselves. In the acquisition of these provinces are comprised all the benefits which his reign—for it was no less—conferred on France. All other results, except in so far as they aided in these conquests, display nothing to either admire or approve. Second to his conquests, that which is the great theme of panegyric with his countrymen, is the destruction of the upper aristocracy, and his depriving all, who pretended to the name, of political influence. But the great defect and abuse at the commencement of the seventeenth century in France was not so much the possession of privileges and power by divers classes, as the arbitrary and forcible use of them. Governors were absolute in their provinces, the Huguenots in their towns, parliaments in their jurisdictions, the clergy in their vast domains. The desires, the tendency, and admission of the age went to abate all this exorbitance, and reduce it to what was legal and just. The estates, and even the nobles when assembling, could, as was felt even by those in 1561, easily have been brought to concur in and accomplish such a task. But Richelieu's sceptre was his sword; he could only correct with the searing-iron, and his temper was incapable of stopping short of an extreme. Rude, overbearing, insolent, ill-tempered, he suffered no equal and tolerated no inferior, except of the most servile nature. A prince or high noble could not exist in the precincts of the court; and even female superiority was as insufferable to him as male. The man who refused his benefit, or the woman who spurned his addresses, were at once enemies of the state, and

CHAP. XXIX.

exile, imprisonment, or the block, became, in his opinion, their due. The middle ages never produced a tyrant more ruthless or more sanguinary; and one cannot but think that a character so fit for the fifteenth century must have been inflicted by mistake upon the seventeenth. One does not see, indeed, how such ferocity was required, even for his great aims. The sagacious cardinal might have governed the king, one should think, without exiling his mother, humiliating his wife, driving the princes his relatives to desperation by depriving them, not only of all power, but of all free action, within their own households. Nobles, great and small, might surely have been brought to serve the state, obey the king, and be contented with legal rights and fair emoluments, instead of being driven, one after the other, to conspiracy and the scaffold, by the jealousy, the trickery, and redoubled caprice of the king and of his minister. Tyranny, if it crushes one class, has generally the advantage of favouring another, and the rulers whose sceptre has humbled the noble, are represented as raising in proportion the classes beneath them. But the leaden tyranny of Richelieu weighed upon all classes. His severity to the noble did not make him less intolerant of the municipal rights of the citizen, and did not render the yoke of his combined tax and police system less onerous to the people. A word of Richelieu might have declared all classes subject alike to the *taille;* but no, he left the nobles all their fiscal privileges, precisely those of which they might in strict justice have been deprived; and such was the severity of his exactions, that every province was up in arms. Under the name of *croquants* in the south, *vas-nu-pieds* in Normandy, and other names elsewhere, the labouring class was in universal revolt. Their grievance was the rule of *solidité*, which exposed any peasant, after he had paid his own taxes, to be imprisoned for his neighbour in default: and could the

Spaniards have timed their invasion with one of these popular revolts, they might have excited a troublesome servile war.

The efforts of Richelieu to abolish the estates in every province have been mentioned. If he ceased to insist on their abolition, it was not that he relented, but because he saw that the system of election which he substituted for them left still a great share of authority to the local magistrates. These he finally abrogated, to replace them by officers whom he called *intendants*, and who came to unite in their persons an unlimited power in all matters of finance, justice, and police. These proconsuls superseded the authority of the states, parliaments, and governors, and threatened to establish that system of centralisation which, though interrupted and modified in subsequent reigns, has still ended by prevailing in France. The centre to which the intendants rendered their accounts, and from which they received their instructions, was the council of state —a body formed and controlled by the prime minister, which on different days, and at different times, assumed different characters and functions; being at one time a court of appeal, at another an office of domestic administration, or a council of foreign affairs.

With all these administrative regulations, Richelieu could never succeed in restoring anything like order in his finances. For this, some years of economy and peace were required. But Richelieu could not afford them. He was ever raising armies, lavishing subsidies. He pensioned half the Roman cardinals on the one hand, and the Protestants, Dutch, and Swedes on the other. He kept up six or seven large armies, to pay which the minister had recourse to the most extraordinary expedients. He sold offices in the judicature, no longer singly, nor by the dozen, but by the hundred; abolishing them afterwards in the same sweeping manner. He boasts in one of his declarations

CHAP. XXIX.

of his cancelling 100,000 useless offices, forgetting to add, that he had sold and created quite as many. When the Spaniards came to the Oise, he summoned the *corps de metiers;* and it was then agreed that every carriage-gate should furnish a horseman, and every lesser door a foot soldier. He proposed making a sweep of the tall valets of the rich, and mounting them on their masters' carriage-horses to repel the enemy. Brienne ventured to say they would make but bad soldiers with so little training; at which the cardinal was wroth, and accused Brienne of mocking his plans and exertions. His tax upon *personnes aisées* might have endeared Richelieu to the revolutionists of his country, if he had not excepted prelates and nobles from the class of the wealthy.

Richelieu himself estimates the money raised throughout the kingdom at eighty millions of livres, less than one-half of which reached the treasury. The thirty millions of this, which was interest upon debt, the cardinal proposed paying off at the price to which they had fallen in the market. Caillet estimates that 100 millions of livres were raised annually under Louis the Thirteenth—equal to 200 millions of francs of our day—the purchaseable rate of which was double of what it may be considered at present. Louis the Thirteenth's revenue was thus upwards of 16 millions sterling, at a time when France did not contain more than 16 millions of inhabitants. Half of this was paid by the peasantry in the shape of *taille.**

The prodigality of his expenditure in war, and the never-ceasing sacrifice of all domestic order and interest to his foreign policy, rendered at the same time nugatory whatever views Richelieu entertained for ensuring or ameliorating the condition of the industrious and middle class. His schemes for commercial or colonial enterprise, whether in the seaports of Britanny,

* Forbonnais.

or the shores of the St. Lawrence, utterly failed. In squeezing every remnant of freedom and independence out of the middle class, he could not render it productive of wealth. This class had indeed been turned to a species of industry and ambition naturally most foreign to it. Instead of making wealth from trade, and imparting a fair portion to the country's revenue, the middle class were enticed to prey upon the state. The high functions of justice and administration were offered to their purchase. In addition to the purchase-money, they were liable to forced loans or the suspension from office, and consequently were compelled to recover the sums they had spent or invested, by robbing the people and the government. Nor were the duties of those offices reserved for the noblesse performed with probity. Richelieu's memoirs repeat year after year the same complaints of dilapidation and corruption in military expenditure. His armies are often stopped for want of provisions, or defeated for want of powder. Garrisons are left unprovided and fortifications unrepaired. Richelieu's only resource for such faults was the executioner. But decapitation itself was no more able to put down corruption in France than it was in Turkey. When the state bestows and the age values no reward save money, the one great prize will be sought through all ways and at all risks.

Another half century, indeed, of Richelieu's administration, or of an administration like his, would have reduced France to the state of the Ottoman empire, where all life and justice are alike at the mercy of the sultan and his vizier; where all internal administration is sacrificed to glory and to conquest, and the fortune of subjects squeezed out of them, till they are reckless and incapable of making or producing more; where a middle class may be said not to exist; where an upper one, not certain of even life under an iniquitous

CHAP. XXIX.

régime, can aspire to no more than the distinctions of servility; where religion adds all the frenzy of fanaticism to the shallowness of faith; where law meant the momentary caprice of a master; and justice the greediness of the judge. What saved France from sinking to the level of Turkey and other absolutely-ruled countries, was not the stubbornness of the peasant or the independence of its citizens; both lay willingly prostrate in the dust. It was the educated class that united to raise their heads under the less complete despotism which succeeded; and when all else succumbed, intellect at least remained free. Descartes broached an independent philosophy; Corneille displayed upon the stage the heroism of virtue and of duty. The chivalric and noble spirit of the gentleman resisted, however ineffectually, the ever-debasing pressure of the previous century — of religious bigotry first, and of political bigotry afterwards. And there came to be formed in France, principally amongst the upper classes, a public opinion and a social law, which despotism itself was obliged to respect.

It would be unfair not to observe at the same time that Richelieu gave puissant support to what he conceived to be a purely literary movement. He founded the French Academy in 1635, and, as all must emanate from the crown, a royal printing-office. Some years previous the cardinal founded the "Gazette," to which not only himself but Louis the Thirteenth was a contributor.* As he put personality in everything, Richelieu aspired to be a poet as well as a statesman and a gallant. He was as jealous of Corneille for shining in tragedy, as of the courtiers who averted from him the smile of beauty. To the philosophic movement of his age Richelieu was a stranger. His ideas turned in another sphere. To spontaneity, to aught indeed save dull servility in religion, he was a decided foe. He abhorred and dreaded

* MSS. Bethune. 9834.

liberty, and looked upon Jansenism as a religious breach through which it might one day chance to creep. To fill it up and immure the man that worked at it, was therefore his impulse. Even in literature, Richelieu's anxieties and tastes looked rather to the form and style than to aught else, and he defended the unities as he did orthodoxy with the idea that the world of letters, as that of politics and of religion, must necessarily be a despotism.

In hastening to depict the great achievements of Richelieu in the territorial completion of France, and in pausing to sketch briefly the system of administration with which he supported it, we have omitted not the least important of his history—the later struggles in which he was engaged, and the danger he underwent whilst seeking to preserve his hold over the king. The *Day of Dupes* has been recounted, as well as the peril which Richelieu escaped, when the invasion of the Spaniards to the Oise and the alarm of the Parisians brought the Duke of Orleans and the Count of Soissons together and suggested the scheme of making away with the cardinal. But for the want of courage in the Duke of Orleans, the days of the cardinal had then been numbered. When Richelieu came into the king's presence, he left behind him the guards, with which everywhere else he was closely attended. And for this reason the cardinal generally took up his quarters and residence, not in the same town or village with the monarch, but at some distance.

It was not of princes or courtiers alone that Richelieu conceived he had reason to be jealous. The tenderer sex were even more his enemies. He might have had some pretext for keeping the queen mother at a distance from her son, but no adequate cause for estranging the king from his young wife. She, indeed, was Spanish, and may have looked with disapproval upon the cardinal's hatred to Madrid and its govern-

CHAP. XXIX.

ment. But Anne of Austria in her widowhood persevered in the anti-Spanish policy, so far as French interests required, and Richelieu thus might have found in her no obstacle at an earlier period to what was patriotic in his views. The quarrel and the rivalry in which he entered with regard to Queen Anne and her friends, female and male, were very mean, the trouble and the peril which grew out of this antagonism being in a great measure of his own creation. He wove, indeed, about every personage such a web of espionage, that he made himself believe all the world to be conspiring against him—the fears which he conceived and the precautions he employed having for their result that very evil which he wished to guard against. The king's mother, the king's brother, the king's wife, being all kept down by the cardinal, excluded from influence, and humiliated by him, were necessarily his enemies, and necessarily communicated to each other their causes of resentment and hopes of vengeance. And this in the eyes of the king and his minister was treason.

It is at once curious and sad to contemplate, those two sickly and jealous beings, wielding all the power and resources of a great empire, and yet wanting the common pleasures and interests of the humblest of humanity. Louis would have almost trucked his crown for a friend, and the cardinal would have given all he could part with—his power and his vindictiveness were not of these—to find a mistress or an ally worthy of him. Richelieu is said to have made gallant advances to Queen Anne, his rancour being one of the results of her scorn. However this may be, he certainly sought to win her friend, Madame de Chevreuse, a clever, rich, and beautiful widow. But amidst all the prizes and pleasures that the king and his minister might command, love was not of the number. Madame de Chevreuse preferred Chancellor Chateauneuf to the

powerful cardinal, and the latter avenged himself on the one by exile, and the other by ten years of close imprisonment.

The story of De Luyne's favour with Louis has been told. A youth named Baradas promised to tread in his steps till he was snuffed out by the cardinal. St. Simon, another fortunate youth, contributed to save the cardinal on the Day of Dupes. He too fell into disgrace. Louis then sought a companion and confidant in the female sex, and thought to find one in Mademoiselle Hautefort, a fair beauty with bright blue eyes. She was one of the ladies of Marie de Medicis, and when that queen left the court; Louis transferred the maids of honour to Queen Anne. With her and her companions Louis used to engage in *partis de chasses*, and even to compose music for them of an evening. Mademoiselle de Hautefort, however, loved the queen too well not to displease the king by her opinions, and she was moreover *railleuse*, which alarmed and perplexed her timid lover. He, therefore, turned his attentions in 1635 to Mademoiselle Lafayette, a dark beauty, who, instead of gaily mocking his majesty, pitied his friendless and forlorn condition. Though pious and virtuous, still she was so gentle that Louis once took heart and proposed that she should live under his protection at Versailles. This but confirmed the young lady in a project which she had long entertained, of retiring to a convent. Louis would not oppose. Richelieu directed the king's confessor to urge her to the step. The Père Caussin did precisely the contrary, for he preferred the cause of the queen to that of the cardinal. He was expelled from court in consequence, and Mademoiselle de Lafayette entered the convent of Sainte Marie in the Faubourg St. Antoine.*

* Cousin's Madame de Hautefort, Madame de Motteville, &c.

CHAP. XXIX.

Apparently for the sake of being avenged at once of all his female foes, and to persuade the king that they were conspiring with the enemies of the kingdom, the cardinal in 1637 caused a valet of Queen Anne to be arrested with a letter written by her to Madame de Chevreuse. It was discovered that her majesty was in the habit of paying visits to the convent of Val de Grace, and of there meeting her friend, supposed to be an exile either at Dampierre or at Tours. The superior of Val de Grace was also arrested, and one letter of the queen dated some years previous was found.* From this it appeared that Queen Anne had written on several occasions to her relatives at Madrid and at Brussels, and that she was in communication with the Spanish ambassador and the English agent, Lord Montague. The political allusions in her letters are of the most trivial kind. As Marillac said, when he was condemned to death, that there was not sufficient against him to whip a valet, so Queen Anne might have alleged that what she was accused of, would scarcely have served to dismiss a domestic. Richelieu, however, exaggerated her fault, and made harm of the least communication, natural enough to a princess who had been deprived of every friend and of every influence, and who was threatened with durance and dismissal for not being submissive to the all-powerful cardinal. It was the boast of the latter to force all whom he could, even his most trustworthy servants, to sign a confession of guilt in order that he might turn it to use against them at a fitting opportunity. Such a document he compelled Queen Anne to sign, whilst professing to promise oblivion of her supposed crimes†; the king following it up

* M. Cousin has published in the appendix to his Madame de Chevreuse the paper found on this occasion.

† Such a confession of guilt he forced from Bullion, the superintendant of finance, declaring as he put it up, that he had now enough against him to decapitate him at any time.

by the most humiliating orders, forbidding her to visit any convents, to write to any of her relatives, or, indeed, to write at all, without showing her letters to a third person, Madame de Senecy. As to Madame de Chevreuse, she fled from France in disguise, and after a perilous escape reached Madrid, and finally the court of England.*

Richelieu might have proceeded to much graver acts against the queen but for a circumstance which Louis himself considered providential, and as a consequence of his having formally placed France under the special protection of the Virgin Mary.† After spending the day pursuing game in the woods of Versailles, he proceeded through Paris to reach St. Maur. Passing through the capital, he hastened to pay a visit to Madlle. Lafayette in her convent parlour. During his visit there commenced a heavy thunder-storm, which filled the roads with water, and prevented circulation. The king's attendants recommended him to stay and pass the night at the Louvre. He had no chamber there, none other than the queen's. Thither he reluctantly repaired, the meeting leading to at least momentary reconciliation. It was December, 1637. In the September following Anne of Austria was confined of her first child, the future Louis the Fourteenth.‡

This event, followed by the birth of another son, if it did not restore to Anne even legitimate influence over her husband, still gave her stability as a queen mother. Louis, indeed, resumed his conversations with Madlle. de Hautefort, who in turn renewed her representations in favour of the queen mother. In order to defeat the feminine cabal, Richelieu procured her banishment from court, and advanced to be companion of

* See Cousin's Madame de Chevreuse, Mémoires de la Porte, Griffet, &c.

† Mercure Français, v. xxii.

‡ Cousin's Hautefort, Memoirs of De Motteville, Montglat, &c.

CHAP. XXIX.

the king's leisure hours the second son of the Marquis d'Effiat, his former minister of finance. Of handsome person, and of a petulant and independent character, Cinq Mars grew rapidly in the king's favour. He was made *grand ecuyer*, and Richelieu had soon not to promote, but to check his advancement. His life and that of the king consisted of a series of quarrels, Cinq Mars feeling weary of the royal solitude, which was broken merely by the eager pursuit of game. The youth had been accustomed to the society of Madame de Rohan's salon, as well as the dubious one of Marion de Lorme, the famous courtesan. And after a day spent in the fatigues of the chase, the king had no sooner retired to rest at St. Germains than Cinq Mars would ride to Paris, pass the night in gaiety, and be back early in the morning to join in the king's favourite pastime. His spirits were less buoyant on such occasions, and Louis discovering the reason, was resentful and jealous, as if his favourite had been unfaithful to him.

Richelieu, in order to keep his hold over the king, had but this one favourite to preserve true to his interests, for Louis saw no one else. Courtiers there were none. The Prince of Condé had indeed thrown himself most servilely at the cardinal's feet, so completely, that his heir, the Duc d'Enghien, espoused Madlle. de Maillé Brezé, niece of the cardinal, in 1641. But all other princes and grandees held aloof. The Duc de la Valette, son of the Duc d'Epernon, having failed to give sufficiently energetic support to Condé in his attack upon Fuenterabia, was prosecuted for it*, and, on his fleeing to England, condemned as contumacious to lose his head. A witness being found to accuse the Duc de Vendôme of having suborned some one to kill the cardinal, he, knowing that the justice of the time meant merely Richelieu's vindictiveness, fled to England.

* He had been cognisant of Monsieur's and the Count of Soissons' plot to get rid of the cardinal.

The Count of Soissons was at Sedan when, in 1641, a secret league was made between him, the Dukes of Lorraine, Guise, and Bouillon, supported by Spain, to march an army against Paris. Soissons was the most determined and formidable of the enemies of the cardinal, whose every attempt to conciliate him failed. Richelieu's habit was to gain the dependants or intimates of princes, so as to govern them by their means. But this trick, however it might succeed with the Duke of Orleans, failed with the Count of Soissons, who drove from his service whomsoever he saw or suspected to have been gained by the cardinal. De Retz, indeed, judged Soissons not capable of being a great or successful conspirator, "having courage but not resolution, and being incapable of distinguishing between the extravagant and the impossible." Richelieu, however, forced the Count of Soissons to take arms against him, by summoning him under a penalty to return to France. At Sedan were the dukes of Bouillon and Guise, the latter a prelate, who had succeeded to the title on the death of his brother, that duke who was governor of Provence. The moment the league between them for attacking the cardinal was known in France, it was approved by all—by the queen, by Monsieur, by the marshals in the Bastille, Vitry and Bassompièrre, and by Cinq Mars himself. The Spanish court was ready on this, as on all other occasions, to promise succours of horse and foot against the cardinal. The latter despatched the Marshal de Chatillon with an army, which Soissons soon faced with 3000 men of his own and 7000 imperialists. Both sides expected the cooperation of the Duke of Lorraine, who, however, came to neither. An engagement took place between the armies on the 6th of June, at a place called La Marfée. It was the Marshal de Chatillon who led the royal army to the attack, but his cavalry showed at once a disinclination to combat, which was most unusual,

CHAP. XXIX.

especially with this portion of a French army. The mounted gentlemen refused to make the cardinal victorious over the Count de Soissons, the cause of the latter being their own.* The royal army thus suffered a signal defeat, Chatillon himself with difficulty escaping. But in the rout which ensued a cavalier approached the Count of Soissons, and, placing his pistol close to his head, shot down the prince. The event, fortuitous or designed, saved Richelieu from destruction, and defeated the universal though tacit conspiracy of all the court, noblesse, and even army against him.†

The simultaneous victory and death of the Count of Soissons forced all the enemies of Richelieu to hide their heads and make their peace for the moment. The Duc de Bouillon offered his submission, which the cardinal was willing to accept, but for some time could not overcome the obstinate determination of the king to place on its trial the dead body of Soissons. Such a mania for trials and condemnation had Louis! This difficulty being got over, De Bouillon was not only pardoned, but, as the cardinal hoped, completely won over by obtaining the command of an army in Italy.

If La Marfée had thus terrified the conspirators, it also showed that the arms of Richelieu were not invincible; and this prompted them to similar attempts. Cinq Mars took up the design which had dropped from the hand of Soissons. Richelieu was too imperious, and often too justly so, not to mortify the precocious ambition of the favourite, who had asked to command armies, to be created *duc* and *pair*, and who aspired

* Puysegur and Chatillon give different accounts of the battle of La Marfée, which, however, was but a defection and a rout. MS. Colbert, 117 to 121, contain the despatches of Marshal Chatillon.

† For the enterprise of the Count of Soissons see the Père Griffet, Cousin's Chevreuse, Memoirs of Campion, of Brienne, of De Retz, De Bouillon, and De la Rochefoucauld.

to the hand of the Princess Marie de Gonzaga, the beautiful daughter of the Duke of Mantua. Richelieu reproached him with his audacity. The king having Cinq Mars to be present sometimes at his political conversations with the cardinal, the latter forbade this at last. Cinq Mars took his revenge by making the cardinal the butt of his ridicule in speaking with the monarch, who enjoyed the satire. The favourite perceived that a royal valet, of Richelieu's appointment, betrayed all their conversations. The king was made to expel him ignominiously; the minister and the favourite thus defeating each other's purposes, and provoking mutual enmity and resentment. Cinq Mars was thrown necessarily into the councils and privacy of all those who conspired against the minister. He became the confidence and hope of the queen, of Monsieur, of Madame de Chevreuse. He had friends of his own, Fontrailles and De Thou, who represented to him that he must either fly, or overthrow the cardinal. The necessity of the alternative he himself fully admitted. There was one casualty, the king's death—which, from his languor and failing health, could not be far distant —which filled the favourite, the Duke of Orleans, and Queen Anne with terror, since it might consign them all to the power and vengeance of the cardinal; for the latter, under the pretext of securing the continuance of the anti-Spanish policy, might easily induce Louis to ordain, by testament or otherwise, that his children should be removed from the tutelage of their mother, and entrusted to that of the cardinal, as the fittest regent during their minority.* The prospect of such a calamity concerned all. The never-ceasing consultation was how to escape it. Fontrailles, the friend of Cinq Mars, proposed assassination; but the Duke of Orleans

* That this idea was entertained, appears by a letter from Chavigny to Richelieu, published by M. Cousin from the French Foreign Office Archives. See his Chevreuse, p. 101.

CHAP. XXIX.

shrank from it; and De Thou especially, the friend of Cinq Mars, declared he would have nothing to do with blood. A conspiracy and an armed insurrection, such as that which had well-nigh succeeded with the Count of Soissons, appeared the wisest mode of action.

The necessity of a fortress as a point to rally to, or issue from, was obvious. The Duke of Bouillon alone could give that. But he had so lately made his peace and received his reward, that his adhesion might be doubted. De Thou, who was the duke's friend and relative, undertook his conversion; and, having made a journey for the purpose, succeeded in his design. The duke, however, would be no party to the plot, unless Spanish aid was secured; for Spanish aid, he said, could alone render him safe in Sedan, and enable him to keep the field.* In obedience, therefore, to the duke's desire, Cinq Mars, in concert with the Duke of Orleans, despatched Fontrailles to Madrid to conclude a treaty similar to that which had proved so profitable to the Count of Soissons. The envoy succeeded fully, and brought back a treaty†, promising 12,000 foot and half the number of horse, with a sum of 80,000 ducats to Gaston and Cinq Mars; all the places taken in the war to be handed over to the Duke of Orleans, Spain reaping no benefit from the success of the enterprise, save peace.

The court had reached Narbonne in the middle of March, 1642; Richelieu ill, but full of vigour in ordering the investment of Perpignan, and preparing for a campaign in Catalonia. Although Louis joined in this purpose, and had journeyed south by Richelieu's desire, he showed himself inspired with all the disgust which Cinq Mars breathed of his policy and person. He evinced this fully, when, on the capture of Colliure,

* Relation de Fontrailles. Griffet. Mémoires de Montglat.

† The Treaty is published in the Mémoires de Brienne.

its government was bestowed according to the recommendation of Cinq Mars and against the opinion of Richelieu. And yet, when the monarch departed, and betook himself with his favourite to the camp of Perpignan, the wisdom of the experienced minister spoke more strongly for him in his absence; whilst the juvenile folly of the favourite present, more exuberant in the hour of expected triumph, alarmed and alienated the monarch. Cinq Mars, in his conversation, did not hesitate to mock the policy and depreciate the glory of the war, and did not shrink from betraying his preference of the cause of Olivarez and of Spain to that of Richelieu and France. The treaty concluded at Madrid on the 13th of May reached Cinq Mars towards the close of the month, and could not but influence his behaviour and his language. Louis was so displeased, that he gradually became estranged from the favourite, feigned sleep to avoid conversation with him, and at last denied him the free entrance to his presence, which he had always enjoyed. Whilst Cinq Mars was thus destroying his own influence with the king, Richelieu, in doubt and despair, was making his will. His anxiety produced a severe illness, which interrupted the active measures of his enemies by the hope that a natural death would deliver them of their foe. He rallied, however, but thought it prudent to have himself carried off from the vicinity of Cinq Mars and the court to Tarascon, in Provence, the governor of which was attached to him. Louis was about this time shaken by a report that the Dutch were about to conclude a separate peace with Spain: as to the reason, he was told, of course, by a friend of the cardinal, that the Dutch were actuated by the belief, then general, that the king was intending to replace Richelieu in his councils by Cinq Mars. Louis was seen to blush at the mere imputation. About the same time there arrived tidings of the

CHAP. XXIX.

defeat of the Maréchal de Guiche at Hennecourt, on the Scheldt, with the loss of 4000 men. Whilst the principal forces of the monarchy were employed in the south, the Spaniards might renew their invasion of 1637. Louis thought he had more need of Richelieu than ever. And writing to him early in June on the subject of this defeat and the means of repairing it, the king gave the assurance that he would never separate from him.* Cinq Mars in the meantime was warned by his friends that delay was dangerous. The Princess Marie de Gonzaga wrote to him from Paris that his enterprise was known there as clearly as the passage of the Seine under the Pont Neuf. Fontrailles, the negotiator of the treaty, resolved to withdraw to England, urging Cinq Mars to repair at once with Monsieur to Sedan. But the favourite, though anxious to quit the court, was desirous of doing so with dignity, and delayed, in order to appoint a day for marching with the Duke of Orleans.

Richelieu had meanwhile at Tarascon obtained a copy of the treaty with Spain. By what means or hands he got possession of it remains still a mystery. Some historians accuse Queen Anne of the treachery. She may, by her imprudence, as upon a former occasion, have put Richelieu on the track of this treaty; but it is not likely she herself betrayed it. Olivarez is also accused of sending it to the cardinal—another improbability. But Richelieu had spies and agents everywhere. On the 11th of June he procured, if not a copy of the Spanish treaty, at least such material proofs of its existence as might fully convince and satisfy the king. These he forwarded immediately by Chavigny to Narbonne.† A plot in which the Dukes of Orleans and Bouillon, as well as Spain, had joined, was as clearly against Louis himself as against Richelieu.

* Letter in Auberi.

† Letters of Chavigny, published from the Foreign Office Archives, by Cousin, Mad. de Chevreuse.

The king's resentment was accordingly great, and he signed at once the order for the arrest of Cinq Mars as well as for that of the Duc de Bouillon, then with the army of Italy. De Thou was seized at his own house as an accomplice; and as for the Duke of Orleans, all that was demanded of him he was but too anxious to accord—a full confession of his own guilt, and of those with whom he had conspired.

It was not without remorse and hesitation that Louis gave up his favourite to the vengeance of Richelieu. But the king, even before he signed the fatal arrest, was in the hands of the cardinal's emissaries. De Noyers, Chavigny, and especially Mazarin, pointed out the weakness of sacrificing policy to affection, and refuted the doubt which haunted the king's mind, of one name being surreptitiously introduced for another in the treaty. 'Pained by the necessity of sacrificing the life of one whom he loved to another whom he hated, he hastened his return to Paris. The Rhone was the only road then north and south, and this obliged Louis to pass by Tarascon. An interview necessarily took place between him and Richelieu, although it was only effected by bringing them in their litters or couches close to each other. The king feared reproaches. The cardinal merely abounded in thanks. Thus the interview between the two dying personages, who agreed to send to the scaffold the youth whom their own waywardness had tempted and entrapped, was cordial. The vindictive passion of the churchman and the submissive despondency of the king harmonised with each other. Yet, when the king and cardinal next met, the former visiting the latter at Ruel, Richelieu bade his guards conceal their arms beneath their cloaks, and be present at the interview, so greatly did he fear the fate of a Turkish Vizier.*

Cinq Mars and De Thou were brought to Lyons and

* Montglat.

CHAP. XXIX.

tried before a commission, at the head of which was the chancellor. For the former to deny the Spanish treaty was impossible, for the Duke of Orleans confessed and gave a copy of it, for which, though at first exiled to Annecy, and threatened with being sent out of the kingdom to Venice, he was permitted once more to reside at Blois. The Duke of Bouillon, arrested at Casale, was also confronted with the accused. His head had been in no slight peril, but he saved it on the condition of surrendering Sedan. The fate of Cinq Mars and of his friend, De Thou, who pleaded that he only knew the less guilty portions of the plot, and was not privy to the treaty, excited almost as much commiseration as that of Montmorency himself. Richelieu, however, knew no mercy, and showed his ruthlessness in dragging his prisoners after the boat in which he ascended the Rhone. Nor did the cardinal quit Lyons till he was assured of their condemnation. His young victims suffered death in that city in September, meeting their fate with touching friendship, religious resignation, and manly courage.

In the previous July Marie de Medicis had expired at Cologne. All Richelieu's enemies were defeated or no more. His arms were equally triumphant—Perpignan surrendered, La Motte was victorious in Catalonia, as the Duc de Longueville was in the Milanese, and the Swedish ally of Richelieu, Torstenson, won a great battle near Leipzig over the emperor. Such were the glorious events which crowded round Richelieu towards the close of 1642. But disease and weakness, from which he had been never exempt, closed upon him at the same time. An abscess in the arm, and an ulcer which prevented other than a lying posture, rendered his journeying difficult, so that it was only by boat along river or canal, that he could reach Ruel. Mistrust, as well as disease, afflicted him. The manifestation of it when Louis visited him has been related.

And so apprehensive remained the great minister, that instead of employing his agents with the king, Chavigny and De Noyers, on serious matters of state, their efforts in November were directed to obtain the dismissal of four captains of the king's guard, whom Richelieu dreaded. They also were ordered to demand that the cardinal might be accompanied by his own guards when visiting the monarch. When Louis hesitated, Chavigny said to him that the cardinal, if ordered to remove from his service any one hateful to his majesty, would not hesitate. "Then he had better get rid of you," replied the king, "for you are my aversion."

In such trivial quarrels were spent the time and the health (for both suffered from them) of king and cardinal during November. In the midst of this, on the 28th of the month, Richelieu were seized with a severe pain in the side and fever. He was carried to the Palais Cardinal, at Paris, the present Palais Royal. On the 1st of December he spat blood and his danger was apparent. The king visited him, and the cardinal seized the opportunity to recommend De Noyers, Chavigny and Mazarin as ministers, and to deprecate any power or influence being left to the Duke of Orleans. Having compelled his physician to inform him of his actual state, and learning that he had but a few hours to live, Richelieu had recourse to the consolations of religion, but with a confidence and courage far above the contrition of a Christian. He was told to forgive his enemies. "I have none," said the cardinal, "save those of the state." To the last he covered his cruelty and his crimes with the mantle of his policy. He invoked the sacrament, as it was brought near to him, as his future judge, and besought its condemnation if he had been actuated by other motives than those of religion and of the state. The prelate who attended declared himself shocked at so much assurance. Cardinal Richelieu expired on the 4th of December, 1642.

CHAP. XXIX.

In less than six months Louis the Thirteenth followed his potent minister to the grave. The interval was unmarked by any great public event, and is filled in French history by intrigues for that power which had fallen from Richelieu and was passing from the hands of the king. Louis, after the cardinal's death, followed his last counsels and his policy, partly from a conviction of their wisdom, partly from a desire to persuade the world that, instead of having been the instrument of the cardinal, he had himself calculated and willed the daily acts of the government. De Noyers, Chavigny, and Mazarin, as Richelieu advised, were the royal ministers. The chief affair with them, as with the whole court—now crowded by expectants, for the king in his sinking health had allowed all the enemies of Richelieu to return from exile and from prison—was the disposal of the future regency. Almost all admitted that Anne of Austria was the fittest to be entrusted with the care of her children and the supreme power of the state, the duties being inseparable. The king was of a contrary opinion. He believed both his brother and his wife to be incapable of governing patriotically; and, moreover, he hated both. Of his counsellors one, De Noyers, declared for the queen; another, Chavigny, preferred Monsieur; the third, Mazarin, prudently displayed no preference, but secretly came to an understanding with Anne. The latter was embarrassed by the number who flocked and rallied to her. The fiercest enemies found themselves face to face in her salons, and ready to dispute in her antechambers. But the king, though languishing, had still a will to be respected. De Noyers, who came forward too boldly on the queen's behalf, was driven from office. And Chavigny fared no better in pleading for Monsieur. Louis, however, regulated what he wished to prevail after his death, and caused an ordonnance to be read in council, proclaiming Anne regent, and the

Duke of Orleans lieutenant-general, in case of his demise, but adjoining to them a council, composed of the Prince of Condé, the chancellor, Mazarin, Chavigny, and Bouthilliers, who were to decide each question by plurality of votes. As he supposed the whole five to entertain Richelieu's opinions, this would, in fact, have been the queen's nominal regency, overruled by the friends and disciples of the defunct cardinal.

Instead of demurring to the king's arrangement, Monsieur brought the document to parliament to have it registered as a legal ordonnance. The queen, by Mazarin's secret advice, accepted it. It was every thing, he said, that she should have the title of regent, and be chief in the council; with this it would be easy to assert and assume the plenitude of power. This arrangement, which took place towards the close of April, was followed by the baptism of the heir to the throne. By the king's appointment Mazarin was the godfather, a significant honour; the Princess of Condé, the late cardinal's niece, was the godmother. The king's predilections were political. Personal friendships Louis, indeed, had not left himself; he had sacrificed them all. When the little prince was brought to the king after his christening, the latter asked the child what was his name? "Louis Quatorze," was the precocious reply. "Not yet, my boy," observed his parent.

The ceremony took place at St. Germains, where the king occupied the new château on the brink of the descent, and where he was immediately after taken with severe illness. He was worn to a skeleton, his body covered with white spots, often at the last extreme of inanition, and then rallying to sing psalms or string mushrooms. "He was very ill served in his last illness," says De Pontis, "and could not even get his soup warm. It was painful to see a king, surrounded by a multitude of officers, worse attended than the

CHAP. XXIX.

commonest citizen of Paris."* Most of those around him, indeed, wished him dead, so that his days of convalescence were marked by the sadness of the domestics, and those on which he suffered most by their cheerfulness. The queen inhabited the old château, and could with difficulty restrain the turbulence of her expectants' ambition. The Duke of Vendôme and Marshal Meilleraye, the Duke of Beaufort and the Prince of Condé, still cardinalists or non-cardinalists, anticipated the future struggle for authority. Anne brought her Swiss regiment to guard her, and, when obliged to go to the king in the new château, left her children in the old to the guardianship of the Duke of Beaufort. On the 14th of May Louis expired. The querulous, but not inglorious, despotism which two valetudinarians had exercised over France for twenty years, was at an end.

It is difficult to separate the characters of Louis the Thirteenth and of his great minister, the policy, which was pursued throughout the reign, being the result of the will, the opinions, and the passions of both. Without Richelieu, Louis, indeed, would have been but a cipher. Under no other king than Louis could Richelieu have governed. The peculiar merit of the king was his persistence in upholding a minister, who was displeasing to himself and to everyone else, by his imperious habits, his sickly and jealous temper, and who had but one virtue, that of political capacity. It was something in a monarch to have appreciated this, even in times when Richelieu's efforts wanted success, as they eminently did in his great league for driving the Spaniards from North Italy. Richelieu, on the other hand, to please his master, adopted sentiments and policy not his own. He was no bigot, no monk, no crusader. As his enemies reproach him, he always put first the interests of the state, and those of

* Richelieu says the same in his Testament.

the church after (*mettait l'état en selle et la religion en croupe*). Louis, on the contrary, had all the bigotry and intolerance of the priests, to whom his father committed him. And Richelieu was compelled to undertake his first great act, the reduction of the Huguenots, by the exigence of the king and of the Papal party, which flattered him. Having achieved this great desire of Rome, Richelieu's subsequent policy was directed against it. In Northern Europe he supported the Protestant cause, subsidising Swedes and Dutch, and mainly contributed to that partition of Germany between the two religious influences, which forms still the most effectual barrier against Rome upon the continent. The first ordonnance drawn up under his influence, the Code Michaud, was eminently Gallican, repressive of the sacerdotal and ultramontane spirit. As he subsequently experienced more hostility on the part of the legists than on that of the clergy, he shrank from giving preference to the former, but continued to mulct the church and to use largely its revenues and wealth in the support of war and of a policy the very reverse of what churchmen preferred.

In abatement of the glory of the cardinal, it may be urged that he came to rule the French monarchy at the very time when its power and its resources were attaining their greatest development after a quarter of a century's repose. And with these he attacked the House of Austria, when the resources of Spain were exhausted and its vigour on the decline, whilst those of Germany were neutralised by civil war. To the latter result, however, Richelieu himself largely contributed. If Olivarez frittered away Spanish finances, whilst Richelieu made the most of French, all merit be to the latter. It might not be that the cardinal won the greatest advantages in the sphere or direction whither his ambition especially pointed, but he made up for failure there by success elsewhere. Italian conquest was

CHAP. XXIX.

his first aim. Glory and influence beyond the Alps fascinated him more than victories in any other sphere. In this he departed from the wise convictions of Henry the Fourth and Catherine de Medicis. He did no more than hold his ground at the foot of the Alps, all his schemes for the subjugation of North Italy failing; whilst his support of Sweden and the Protestant powers of the North, more to neutralise and occupy the House of Austria than aught else, gave him the country between Champagne and the Rhine, and added one third to the breadth of France. Richelieu had equally large projects for the conquest or partition of the Low Countries, to which he had the fairer opening from the power of England being paralysed. Yet the acquisition of Artois was all that he accomplished. His glory is to have fixed the frontier of France, Louis the Fourteenth having been able to add little * to what Richelieu had achieved under a world of obstacles and difficulties at home and abroad.

What appeared to Richelieu himself, and still appears to his countrymen, the great merit of his domestic administration, was that he overcame all these difficulties, that he crushed the Huguenots, broke the power of the aristocracy, sent their chiefs to the scaffold, and transformed the provinces from so many different states into the obedient parts of one centralised and absolute kingdom. To what did all this centralisation of power serve, except to render Louis the Fourteenth a magnificent idol, but at the same time himself and his descendants wretched rulers, the curse of themselves and their people, both incapable of improvement or prosperity or even permanence, simply because that freedom, which is the only real life of a people, had been squeezed out of them by Richelieu.

We have, recorded by himself, that great minister's ideas of domestic policy. And certainly more lament-

* Little, indeed, one may say, save Lille and Strasburg.

able testimony of ignorance and barbarism never survived. "All are agreed," writes Richelieu, "that if the people were too much at their ease, there would be no keeping them within the bounds of duty. They may be compared to mules," &c. So much for the people.

Instead of regarding the noblesse as those who hereditarily possessed the chief wealth of the kingdom, and who had consequent rights and an interest in the state, he considered them as merely possessors of courage, in consequence of their birth, which courage they were bound to employ in its service. "The noblesse," he says, "which does not serve in war, is useless and a mere burden to the state; and ought to be reduced to the rank of the people."

Richelieu, in fact, had no idea of a great country but as a machine of war, in which respect his policy completely resembled and anticipated that of Napoleon. His aim was to concentrate France, its wide territory and its large population, so as to make it a compact iron ball, to break into pieces all that came in contact with it, without considering that the country, thus reduced to a rude and ready instrument of violence, becomes itself degraded into a mere mass of matter, deprived of will, of liberty, of intellect, or of any other than of that concrete existence, in which all individuality is lost. There are too many amongst the countrymen of Richelieu who still think this absolutism as the perfection of government and the highest pitch of political wisdom. Whilst in the eyes of such nations and such minds as the English, it appears the mere infancy of political science, that implicit obedience to the authority of one which was natural enough in the pastoral age of the world upon the wide plains of Asia, and at epochs anterior to knowledge of any kind. To transplant such barbarism into our day and pass it off for wisdom, is about the same as if we were to preach the worship of the stars, and carry men back to the political regimen of Babylon.

CHAP. XXIX.

Absolutism, in fact, supposes the world once more brought back to infancy, and implies that in the lapse of so many centuries men had neither lived nor learned.

The characteristic of Richelieu's domestic administration is thus utter ignorance, and, indeed, unpardonable ignorance; for Bodin and a host of publicists in the previous century both knew and affirmed the political rights of humanity. The great minister, indeed, would have scorned to take a lesson from them. For though he may have patronised third-rate poets, he has told us that "letters, if allowed to be universal, would ruin commerce, agriculture, and the army, creating people clever to raise doubts, perhaps, but not resolve them." Of literature, indeed, Richelieu had but leisure and taste for sipping the most trifling flowers. For its high products he had little appreciation. He enregimented, indeed, men of letters in an academy as he would the nobles in the ranks of an army, in order that they might practise discipline and go through their exercises. All that was great in his country, not excepting Corneille, he would have crushed.*

No doubt all this was part of the tendency of the age in France, from which and from circumstances Richelieu received his impulse. The previous century had been one of licence, in which every class struggled for itself, and grasped what power it could. The grandees conspired and levied war, the parliament insisted it was equal with the crown. The very university set up for infallible. The middle classes in turn identified their rights and their hopes with the prevalence of religious opinions, and proscribed alike Protestants and Catholics, when one became predominant and absolute. Men associated together were more passionate and vindictive than when they were isolated. The clergy, whose assemblies and councils in past times were not unmarked by liberalism and intellect, succumbed in the Council of Trent to the extreme of even Roman bigotry. And

Protestants were as incapable of moderation, and often of tolerance. All these classes and all these men struggled after the impossible, no two agreeing, or combining, or consenting to compromise—such anarchy naturally produced a great majority of men indifferent to principle, and eager merely for livelihood and security. The crown alone promised these, and to the crown all rallied. Henry the Fourth began; absolutism and rigour were forced upon the most affable and benign of princes. A relapse after his death to weakness, dilapidation and discord, only increased the national thirst for a supreme ruler, which Louis the Thirteenth and his minister came to satisfy.

But however Richelieu may be excused for proceeding in the path to which the public sentiment and necessities invited, he cannot but be blamed for the length to which he pursued it. The nation might have been willing to resign freedom and to applaud rigour. But Richelieu carried everything to extremes. He was not contented till he had swept away every vestige of provincial, municipal, or individual liberty. No Frenchman's person, property, or life was safe. It is evident that he took a pleasure in cruel acts, and could not throw away the opportunity of sacrificing the only scion of a noble race. He trod out the Montmorencies on the scaffold. A criminal trial was, from beginning to end, his enjoyment and his predilection. He installed the judges, the court, and the victims in his own house, and employed his ingenuity to intimidate the one, to entrap and destroy the other. Thus he brought Marillac to Ruel, Cinq Mars and De Thou to Lyons, within his fangs, like those animals that gloat on the destruction of their prey. Richelieu's chosen friends and agents were of the executioner stamp; even the Capuchin Joseph is an instance. Laubardemont was his especial favourite. Being employed to raze the fortifications of the Huguenots round Loudun, he found that, although the

CHAP. XXIX.

Protestantism of the town had been drowned in blood, it had been succeeded by the most gross sensuality, and by a worship of the devil in its nunneries and convents. Ashamed of such a result, instead of an exposure and fitting castigation of such madness, he rendered it an affair of state, implicating the innocent and the eloquent, and made the discovery of clerical and conventual corruption to expiate it by torture and blood. French justice, and in fact French prisons, became likened to those of Spain—such as Philip the Second and the Inquisition had made them; this, too, in a gay land of indifference and gallantry. And that French society which was so frivolous and flighty, Richelieu, who hated and jaloused it, treated as a Louis the Eleventh might. Its gallants were consigned to perpetual imprisonment; its noble beauties were persecuted with equal severity; whilst those of the humbler or dependent class were broken on the wheel or mangled, as the servile class were wont to be in ancient Rome.

This terrible severity, this love of pomp and arrogance of pride, marks Richelieu's character as appertaining to the fifteenth century rather than to the seventeenth. He had, indeed, all the courage of chivalry, but wanted the generosity; and those principles of honour which fortunately still survived in the gentleman, were quite unknown to the churchman.

In the plenitude of his power and the absence of aught like a friend, Richelieu threw his regards upon Gassion, a French officer, who had served under Gustavus. The Count of Soissons and Monsieur, he knew, had made large offers to win such a partisan. Gassion had declined these, saying he should remain loyal to the king. The cardinal hinted that this was not enough; what His Majesty wanted for his service was, that Colonel Gassion should pretend to listen to the con-

spirators and accept their overtures, in order to learn their sentiments and betray them. The countenance of Gassion became instantly clouded. "I am ready to give my life," said the soldier; "but honour—no!" It is subject of little wonder that Richelieu and Louis the Thirteenth crushed both the French gentry and the middle classes. They wanted the sentiments or the appreciation of the peculiar virtues of either.

LETTER OF BUCKINGHAM TO RICHELIEU.

[State Papers, France, 184.]

MONSEIGNEUR,—Nonobstant les faux rapports qu'on a faits de mes actions par delà, j'ay appris par mes amis que vous vouliez me faire l'honneur d'avoir une correspondance plus particulière avec moy, que par le passé, et pour mieux réussir en nos bonnes intentions, j'ay jugé apropos de vous représenter l'état des affaires qui sont à démesler entre les deux couronnes. Je confesse qu'à l'arrivée de M. le Maréchal de Bassompierre, j'étois porté au rétablissement des français auprès de la reyne; toutefois, n'avouant pas que le roy mon maistre a faillit en envoyant ceux qui estoient après avoir découvert leurs mauvais comportemens, le contrat l'obligeant au contraire; mais ayant servi la France en cette affaire avec passion, non sans hazard, et ayant obtenu de mon maistre non seulement tout ce qui estoit raisonnable, mais tout ce que votre Ambassadeur avoit charge de demander; et le voyant maintenant desavoué, nonobstant qu'il estoit raisonnable, nonobstant qu'il estoit Maréchal de France, Ministre public, aûtorisé par sa commission authentique, je trouve que le roy mon maistre ne croit pas estre maintenant obligé à l'observation des deux Traictés, en ce qui touche les affaires de la maison de la reyne ma maîtresse. De sorte que je ne vois pas que je puisse prendre assurance à traiter simplement par lettre, où ce qui est demandé puisse êstre avoué désormais. Quant à nos vaisseaux, nous n'avons fait que trop des instances des-ja, et quand il vous plaira de considérer tous les passages de cette affaire, je ne doûte pas que par votre jugement, si clair-voyant, vous ne trouveriez à propos de commencer à faire restitution, ayant failli le premier par la rupture du traité de 1650, qui a esté fraichement ratifié

CHAP. XXX.

Et vous puis assurer que le roy mon maistre ne désire rien tant que de vivre en bonne confidence avec le roy son frère, si vous ne le contraignez au contraire. Et pour mon particulier, je contribuerai tout ce qui en dépend, comme,

Monseigneur,

Votre humble et très-affectionné serviteur,

BUCKINGHAM.

CHAP. XXX.

LOUIS THE FOURTEENTH, FROM HIS ACCESSION TO THE DEATH OF MAZARIN.

1643—1661.

THE rule of a female, even though a foreigner, was not displeasing to the ideas of that gallant age. One of its greatest facts and changes was the growth and formation of a society, not synonymous with the court, as it had been in the previous century. The feline nature of Richelieu, and the unsocial habits of Louis, had caused persons of birth to seek other points and places of reunion. The principal attraction then was female beauty, which filled every thought that could be spared from war and politics, in the rude years of civil strife and the voluptuous reign of Henry. As the more peaceful century advanced, mere voluptuousness was found to be but a dull pastime. To idealise it by imagination and refine it by the intellect was found necessary. The Spanish habit of respectful and somewhat quixotic gallantry pleased, as every taste did that came from beyond the Pyrenees, and Queen Anne herself set the example of being flattered by such homage. Tall and well formed, of fair complexion and abundant chestnut hair, small mouth and large seductive eyes, Anne passed for a beauty, and had fascinated not only Buckingham, but the unfortunate Duke de Montmorency, and other suitors. "She had an *esprit galant*," says Madame de Motteville, and, like her aunt, the Infanta Clara Eugenia of the Low Countries, liked

CHAP. XXX.

extremely that "fine gallantry which, without offending virtue, is the great embellishment of a court."

During the lifetime of her husband, Anne was not at liberty to lead fashion or preside over a court, much less to practise even innocent gallantry. Of the different circles that were formed, independent of the court, the most renowned was that of the Marquise de Rambouillet, who first set the example of uniting the wit with the courtier. In her blue saloon first did the man of letters meet on a footing of equality with the man of birth; Voiture, Balzac and the great Corneille himself being there more considered guests than even the *grands seigneurs*, who submitted, some of them not without reserve*, to the fraternity. If the divinities of Madame de Rambouillet's blue saloon were virtuous even to prudery, this character did not extend to all other circles or personages, who were worshipped after the manner of common and even vulgar mortals. And the different connexions which were formed between noble dames and great courtiers constituted one of the chief motives of political conduct, and became matter of historic fact.

The accession to power of queen Anne of Austria could not but be grateful to such a court. Her journey with the young king from the palace of St. Germain's to that of the Louvre was a prolonged triumph. Foremost of those who came to pay homage were the dignitaries of parliament; amongst them President Barillon, who had been imprisoned for resistance to the late government. It was in the vivid recollection of both how the provisions of Henry the Fourth, for restricting the queen's power by a council, had been set aside by the parliament of 1610. It was

* The Prince of Condé, assenting to the praise which some one uttered of Voiture's wit and brilliant conversation, took care to add, "that Voiture would be insupportable, were he at the same time a man of their high condition."

now proposed to follow the example, and that the queen should pay a solemn visit of recognition to their body, when they would take the opportunity to break the king's testament, in so far as it restricted her authority and subjected it to the opinion of the council. Anne accordingly proceeded to the parliament in state, with Louis the Fourteenth *en bavette*, on the 18th of May. The Chancellor Seguier took the opportunity of asking all present their opinion as to the regency,—should it be restricted or absolute? The Duke of Orleans alone could have demurred; but discredited and friendless as he was, and deserved to be, he preferred the advantages to be derived from the queen's favour to the uncertain and unlikely chance of supplanting her. When the first prince of the blood thus supported the queen's absolute regency, the Prince of Condé could not but acquiesce, though he showed less alacrity in declaring it. But he, too, had secretly made his terms, and Anne became absolute mistress of the state.*

She was no sooner so than she felt herself under the influence of new exigencies and new motives. Ere she attained her present high position, her first thought had been to recompense those who had suffered with her from Richelieu's vindictiveness. The Duke of Vendôme, and his two sons, De Beaufort and Mercœur, were the chief amongst these, with Chateauneuf, the ex-chancellor. All had suffered exile and loss for their attachment to the queen, and when to them were added her female friends, the Duchess of Chevreuse and Madlle. de Hautefort, whom Richelieu had driven from court, and who now returned, no one doubted of their power and influence. An ecclesiastic of high dignity was then necessary to a political party. Queen Anne was provided with one in the person of her almoner, Potier, Bishop of Beauvais, who aspired to replace

* Séance du Roy dans le Lit de Justice. MSS. de Fontanieu, 490, 1. Mémoires de Madame de Motteville, &c.

CHAP. XXX.

Richelieu, and for whom she immediately besought a cardinal's hat from Rome. These personages could not, however, be installed in power without altogether breaking with the Prince of Condé, who abhorred the Vendômes, and who at the time of the late king's decease had a fierce personal quarrel with Beaufort. The latter undertook to clear the palace, when Condé declined to receive an order from an inferior. It was not, however, so much Condé's enmity as their own incapacity* that rendered it impossible for Queen Anne to give a monopoly of power to the *Importans*, as the family of the Vendômes and their party were soon called.

To ask advice respecting the delicate questions of foreign policy of the Bishop of Beauvais, or the Duke of Beaufort, were vain: to entrust them with the important negotiation for peace, madness. The queen was thus driven to have recourse to Mazarin, the confidant of Richelieu, the guardian of his secrets, the adept of his policy. The cardinal was appointed chief of the council, but Chavigny and Bonthillier, the mere creatures of Richelieu, were got rid of. The Vendômes and the Duchess of Chevreuse pleaded earnestly for the restoration of Chateauneuf to the chancery, in lieu of Seguier. But this lover of Madame de Chevreuse had been the judge who condemned the unfortunate Montmorency, and his sister, the Princess of Condé, could not forgive the act. Chateauneuf, therefore, could get no nearer to court than his house of Montrouge†, and Madame de Chevreuse, with the other

* The queen, says De Retz, learned that the Bishop of Beauvais, "the greatest of all idiots," in his first interview with the Dutch ambassadors, told them they must become Protestants, if they expected to remain allies of France. The queen, ashamed of such mummery, rose to offer the place of French minister to M. de Gondy. On his refusing she put herself in the hands of Mazarin. According to Mazarin in his *Carnets*, the Bishop of Beauvais proposed restoring all the French conquests, in order to obliterate in France the memory of Cardinal Richelieu. See appendix to Cousin's Madame de Chevreuse, also Memoirs of Brienne, La Chatre, La Rochefoucauld.

† He afterwards obtained the government of Touraine. (Brown.)

enemies of Richelieu, found themselves not only checked in their vengeance, but even their influence in the council disputed by their enemies.

An event which occurred in the very first days of the new reign, came to add new weight and influence to the family of Condé, the great mainstay of the Richelieu party. Previous to his death, Louis the Thirteenth had disposed of the principal military commands in favour of those attached to the Cardinal's policy. The army of Flanders was given to the Prince of Condé's son, the Duc d'Enghien, with the veteran Maréchal de l'Hôpital for his Mentor. D'Enghien had received a careful and unusually good military education, not at home in princely solitude, but at a public school with comrades destined for the profession. Finding himself at one-and-twenty at the head of an army, he determined to take the opportunity to make a military reputation. The Spanish governor of the Low Countries, Don Francisco de Mello, thought the death of the French king a favourable occasion for striking a blow at Champagne. Mustering 25,000 men, a third of whom were horse, he invested on the 12th of May the frontier fortress of Rocroy, which it was necessary to master before penetrating into the Ardennes. D'Enghien hastened to its relief with an army somewhat inferior in number. Mello offered battle, which the Maréchal de l'Hôpital was of opinion should not be fought. The prince rejoined, he would take the responsibility upon himself.*

Entrusting his left wing, which rested on a marsh, to the Maréchal de l'Hôpital, and under him La Ferté Senneterre, the Duke d'Enghien with Gassion led the right, the infantry and artillery occupied the centre, a reserve under Sirot remaining behind. The action began at three in the morning, by an attack of La Ferté

The *Carnets* of Mazarin constituted a diary of this struggle, and show the difficulty he encountered in setting aside Chateauneuf.

* Mémoires de Lenet, La Moussaie, Sirot, Montglat, Cousin's Mém. de Longueville, and novel of the Grand Cyrus.

CHAP. XXX.

Senneterre upon the Spanish right, which De Mello commanded in person. After a sharp contest, the French were repulsed, La Ferté badly wounded. The Maréchal de l'Hôpital coming to his rescue, shared the same fate. And the Spaniards, routing the French left, attacked their centre, took some of its artillery, and killed the officer who commanded it. Meantime the Duke d'Enghien on the right was as successful against his opponent Albuquerque, routing and dispersing his troops, and then, as the Spaniards had done, attacking the neighbouring centre. D'Enghien, however, showed more alacrity than his foes, charged through and through the Walloon and Italian infantry which formed their centre, and then perceiving the distress and defeat of his own left, the prince still pressed on, and took the victorious De Mello in the rear. The manœuvre decided the battle, every part of the Spanish army being driven back and put to the rout. The phalanx of native Spanish soldiers, between four and five thousand strong, was alone an exception, standing firm and unbroken under its commander, Fuentes, whilst all fled around it. Though unsuccessful, the Spaniards showed no intention of surrendering, but, on the contrary, opened a severe fire upon the French from a score of cannon within their ranks. The assailants, repelled first by the pikes of the Spanish soldiers, suffered seriously from this discharge. But at length cannon being brought up, and made to play with effect upon the serried phalanx, the French rushed into it and put the hitherto invincible Spanish infantry almost completely to the sword. This was the most fatal effect of the victory of Rocroy.

Whilst Condé's spirit and military genius defeated the Spaniards in the field, Mazarin at first brought equal talent and felicity to the political struggle in which he was engaged at court. Numerous were his disadvantages. He was a foreigner, not speaking the

tongue of the country he aspired to govern, and consequently obnoxious to ridicule in every word he uttered. He was not even of respectable family, had risen from humble beginnings, and gambling propensities formed the most notable traits of his youth.* He had risen, however, in the service of prelates, the only path to distinction, says Moncenigo, at the court of Rome. When the queen asked her English friend, Montague, as an impartial observer, what was his opinion of the cardinal, he replied, that Mazarin was the contrary of Richelieu, which in many respects was true. The late cardinal was endowed with the qualities fittest for dominating a monarch like Louis the Thirteenth;—sternness, ruthlessness, inflexibility. Mazarin possessed the qualities for captivating Anne of Austria; a humour so flexible, says La Rochefoucauld, that he seemed to have none. Agreeable in person, insinuating in manner, yet grave withal, "of a large and laborious intellect, however full of artifice," Anne could not have found a more capable, and at the same time a more pleasing, guide in her political conduct. Although he may have wanted Richelieu's high and disinterested patriotism, Mazarin was still sagaciously true to the interests of his sovereign and of France. La Rochefoucauld accuses him of "having small views in the midst of his great projects, and of a timid mind behind a bold heart, the contrary of Richelieu, who had a bold mind and a timid heart." But Mazarin was saved the trouble of forming any large plan, his predecessor having left one clearly shaped out, and three-fourths terminated. Mazarin's mission was to accomplish what his brother cardinal had commenced, his task to maintain his power in order to do so.

This last, though facile at first, from the almost immediate hold which Mazarin obtained over the consideration

* Cousin's Jeunesse de Mazarin; De Retz; Walckenaer sur Sévigné; Renée, Nièces de Mazarin; the collection of Mazarinades.

CHAP. XXX.

and subsequently over the affections of the queen, became, as years and events rolled on, far more difficult. Whilst Richelieu governed by the awe which he inspired, the sternness he maintained, the cruelties he exercised, Mazarin was all benign, smiling, and joyous. Powers and parties, struck down as they germed in Richelieu's day, sprung up under Mazarin to interrupt his views and his authority. There was first the mockery of courtiers, not to be despised; then came the more serious discontent of the lower and middle class, and of the judicial body, on account of financial disorder and extortion. The habits of rule and of obedience, confirmed under Richelieu, overcame the first manifestations. But as his successor knew not how to introduce any order, or even clearness, in the financial disarray, the symptoms returned. Fearful of calling in to his aid the army and its successful general Condé, Mazarin betook himself almost as a suppliant to the parliament. In vain. The army and its chief were obliged to be called in, and the prince imposed his will upon both the contending parties. Whilst there is all to pity and nothing to praise in these first six years of Anne and Mazarin's domestic administration, there is full scope for both praise and admiration in the fact, that the minister, whose power was thus disputed and discredited, still succeeded in maintaining the national arms victorious, and in compelling the great Catholic house of Austria to grant fair terms of peace and tolerance to the Protestant south, and to France the important extension of its territory to the Rhine.

The first enemies that Mazarin encountered were the *Importans*. Their discontent at the cardinal's own elevation, the protection which he succeeded in extending to the partisans of Condé, and finally the queen's positive refusal, under Mazarin's advice, either to give the government of Britanny to Vendôme or the town of Sedan to the Duke de Bouillon, drove these magnates,

their families, and their partisans, into open rebellion. Still the queen and the cardinal might have succeeded in holding the balance between the political parties, had not one of those small events, which convulse social life, and place women and their piques foremost in the quarrel, driven both sides to extremes.

Madame de Montbazon, nearly related to Madame de Chevreuse, and a lady of many lovers, of whom the Duke of Beaufort was one, belonged of course to the *Importans*, with the consequent feelings of hostility towards the party of Condé. An amorous letter was found on the floor of her saloon, dropped by one of the gallants who frequented it. Coligny was the person from whose pocket it was supposed to have fallen. Having been read, and been the cause of laughter and comment, Madame de Montbazon chose to imagine that it had been written by Madame de Longueville, the beautiful sister of the Prince of Condé. The supposition, which was not true, was considered an outrage by the duchess's mother, the Princess Dowager of Condé, by the prince, and subsequently by the queen. Pacified for the moment, the quarrel broke out again; and the queen, to satisfy the Princess of Condé, exiled Madame de Montbazon from court, which was an affront to Madame de Chevreuse and the Duchess of Beaufort. They accused Mazarin as the instigator; and some of the Duke of Beaufort's followers, if not himself, laid in consequence an ambuscade for the cardinal, in which they proposed nothing less than to cut his throat. His eminence escaped by staying at home on the occasion. But the danger prompted Mazarin to precipitate the queen into a complete breach with the *Importans*. The Duke of Beaufort was arrested and sent to Vincennes; Madame de Chevreuse was exiled from court, as well as Madame de Hautefort; the Duke of Vendôme was obliged to

CHAP. XXX.

retake the road to exile.* Thus, in three months after the death of Louis the Thirteenth (the arrest of Beaufort took place on the last day of August), Mazarin and the Condés reigned supreme under the authority of Anne.†

An additional reason for getting rid of the *Importans* had been, that the revenues of the state were too scant to permit their division amongst so many. Condé was greedy; the Duke of Orleans lavished large sums at play; and Mazarin had all to pay, in addition to finding money for the many armies. A mild and incapable man, Bailleul, was superintendent of finance; but authority in this department was at first exercised secretly, and then openly, by the Sieur d'Emeri, born of an Italian merchant family settled at Lyons.‡ His task was no easy one, Anne of Austria, on her taking the reins of government, having found the revenues of 1644–5–6 completely consumed.§ Loans were at first resorted to; but the 18,000,000 of rentes, due annually at the Hôtel de Ville, were so ill paid, that instead of borrowing *au denier* 14, as had been the rate, Emery could only do so *au denier* 4.‖ The *taille*, or land-tax, which furnished 50,000,000 out of the 80,000,000 livres regularly levied, was soincapable of augmentation, that it was necessary to forgive arrears in order to get paid the dues of the current year. The townsfolk alone could furnish extraordinary supplies.

Emery conceived a plan for raising 7,000,000 in Paris. A hundred years previous, an edict had gone forth forbidding new houses to be built in the suburbs.

* The Bishop of Beauvais is commanded to return to his bishopric, the Bishop of Lisieux to absent himself, Madame de Chevreuse to go out of town, Madame de Senecy and de Hautefort under a cloud, Chavigny restored to the council, and Mazarin his cavaliers and *estaffiers* to protect him, though yét no formal guard.—*Browne's Letters to Sir Thomas Rowe,* S. P. 244, France.

† Memoirs of Campion, Cousin's Chevreuse, and the almost illegible Carnets of Mazarin.

‡ Histoire du Tems.

§ Forbonnais.

‖ That is, that he could only get in capital four times the amount of annual interest he offered.

Absolute necessity and the silence of the authorities had led to the neglect of this rule. Paris had spread greatly, especially on the south side of the river, the quarter of the university and the law. Emery issued an order that every house built since the prohibition should redeem itself. This order, known by the name of *la toisée*, begat a tumult, which the employment of soldiers rendered worse. The citizens crowded in the streets and in the great hall of the Palace of Justice, where they tumultuously besought the protection of parliament. And there were sufficient numbers of that body but too glad to seize the opportunity of resisting the court.

There are certain epochs in the history of all advanced nations, in which the chance of founding or recovering liberty is palpably afforded them. The rise of the Reformation was one of these epochs; and certainly no fairer prospects of freedom could have opened for a country, than that presented to France during the assembling of the states-general in 1560. The hopes, however, of obtaining religious liberty, and basing it upon civil or political institutions, were destroyed. Intestine war and anarchy filled the rest of the century. Such a state of trouble is naturally followed by a despotism, which the experience of recent anarchy deprives the national heart of all courage to resist. From this cause, partly, France bowed itself under Richelieu. That great minister, whatever his tyranny at home, turned it to glory and grandeur. As the military struggle with the House of Austria was pending, and still incomplete at his death, there must have been a repugnance, even in the breasts of patriots, to interrupt or impede the conduct of war or of negotiations during the years which immediately followed. But when, in the ensuing reign, Austria was crushed under the victories of Condé, and French supremacy in the field and in the cabinet was manifest, all such scruples vanished.

CHAP. XXX.

Still the objections to monarchic or ministerial despotism, and the elements of resistance to them, were not so great or so formidable, as to prevent a prudent minister from appeasing them without any egregious sacrifice of authority. But Mazarin was a foreigner, not only ignorant of the laws and habits of the country he was called to govern, but of the commonest laws and necessities of domestic policy. Having lived in courts, he knew perfectly well how to deal with the personages that mingled in them. He completely succeeded in winning the good graces and keeping the favour of the queen, the Duke of Orleans, and the Prince of Condé, whose avarice he contented, or whose favourites he bribed. Those of the same class who would not be of his friends, Mazarin banished or imprisoned. But for aught below the courtier class, he had neither cognisance nor care. The gentry had given Richelieu little trouble. The continued wars and numerous armies rendered the military profession lucrative and honourable. This, indeed, formed the great strength of Richelieu, who would not permit any commander or grandee to come between the government and the army, and thus monopolise military patronage or divert military adherence. Mazarin neglected, or was unable to do this, and allowed Condé to dispute with him the attachment of the officers. Besides, Richelieu rewarded military talents and courage. Mazarin had no discernment, or at least no desire, to reward military or any other merit than subservience or personal attachment.

There was a class in France against which Richelieu unceasingly warred. This was that irremovable body, principally of lawyers and judges, but also of financiers and administrators, who had purchased their places, who felt a pride and a power in their vested rights, and who were formidable from their numbers and their connections, when every class above and below them was separated and disjointed. These functionaries by

CHAP. XXX.

privilege and for life, resembled the equestrian order in the later times of the Roman republic, as they not only monopolised judicial functions, but the commerce and capital of the country. Civic wealth always found its best investment and its choicest honours upon the benches of parliament or of the Court of Accounts, whose occupants possessed the chief learning and consideration, as well as wealth and authority, in the state. These qualities, which necessarily rendered the class of fixed functionaries moderate, separated them from the people on the one side, and from the nobles on the other. They were thus the natural allies and support for the crown to seek. Richelieu, however, who had no idea of domestic policy, save naked despotism, was jealous of them, and exerted himself not only to deprive them of superfluous and injurious privileges, but of their most essential and beneficial rights. It has been remarked how, by his appointment of Intendants, he superseded both the parliamentary magistrates and the financiers in their respective vocations, and replaced them by functionary dependants on the government. He aimed at completely separating political and judicial authority, and he thought himself right in abstracting from the parliament and from its tribunal the judgment of all political crimes and causes. These he brought before special commissioners, who held but a mock trial, often under the cardinal's own eye and in his own palace. Against these judicial murders the parliament never failed to protest. They interfered in the trial of Marillac, refused in 1631 to register the sentence passed upon the Dukes of Elbœuf and Bellegarde, and protested against the iniquitous and causeless verdict upon the Duke de la Valette.

A prerogative or pretension of parliament still more offensive to such a man as Richelieu, was that of refusing to register, that is validate, fiscal edicts. That popular maxim established thoroughly only in England,

CHAP. XXX.

but known in every European state, that none should be taxed without their consent, had not perished in France. Parliament, as the permanent substitute for the states, uniting in the same assembly the peers of France with its own judges, who might be said to represent the commons, put forth no exorbitant pretensions in hesitating to register. Richelieu punished the recalcitrant by exile, and the whole body by an adjunction of fresh judges to share and to diminish their authority and their profits.

In the first days of her regency, Anne of Austria was endowed with full authority by a decree of parliament. Mazarin was grateful, and lavished respect and flattery on the chief judges. As these were but empty words, and as the domestic administration remained in the hands of Richelieu's creatures, several of the judges began to clamour against the chancellor, and to essay opposition to the government. In those years the assembly, which bore the name of parliament in England, began to display an independence and a defiance of royal and monarchic dictation which could not but have its influence on the opposite side of the channel. Richelieu had fostered and fomented the discontent of the popular party in England. Mazarin would gladly have appeased them if he knew how *, as he could not but discern the disastrous effects they were likely to produce in France. The younger councillors or judges, those of the inferior Courts of Enquetes, were strongly imbued with Dutch and English republican opinions, whilst the elder judges who sate in the *Grande Chambre* were more inclined to the support of monarchic authority. The influence of the elder were however lost in the number of the younger judges, whenever a general assembly was called. As the parliament in a body claimed the right of sanctioning new

* Mémoires de Omer Talon, Histoire du Tems, Mercure Française, Journal du Parliament, Mémoires de M. Molé.

taxes, considering new doctrines, superintending the police of the capital, remonstrating with the king, and drawing up the reasons which induced them to refuse registering his edicts, it was necessary to call a general assembly for such purposes. But the elder evaded this in order to quench the turbulence of their younger brethren. In the first years of Anne's regency, that protest against the somnolent formality of the dominant system of religion, which the Protestants failed in enforcing, was raised by another voice and another party, which grew into the Jansenist. Arnaud then published his book, *De frequenti Communione*, against the Jesuits and the court doctrine of religion. Great excitement was the consequence, and the younger members of the parliament were for making that body the arena of dispute. The first president resisted. And on this occasion the queen promulgated a law that no general assembly of the parliament could be called but by her order.

The younger judges paid small attention to this in the agitation excited by the *toisée*. And when the president of the Grand Chamber refused to convoke the assembly, they not the less left their courts unattended and the course of justice interrupted, whilst clamouring for the exercise of their rights as members of a deliberative body. The *toisée* being withdrawn or diminished to an insignificant amount, Emery proposed to meet pecuniary difficulties by selling between one or two millions of revenues, mortgaged chiefly upon the wine duties of Paris, and other *aides*. These rentes or loans were distributed amongst the citizens, who were to be compelled to take them. The parliament, or chief judges, to whom it was referred, committed the very mean and partial act of sanctioning the fiscal measure on condition that the loan should be forced upon financial contractors and loan jobbers alone. These very naturally protested, and La Ralliére, one of

CHAP. XXX.

them, told the queen that the gentlemen of the *Palais de Justice* were going the way of the English long parliament.* This very much alarmed her. The magistrates so far amended their injustice to the financiers by allowing the rich burgesses and merchants to be included in the list of those who were to take the loan; they did this, however, probably from observing that the rich citizens made common cause with the financiers, to whom they were in the habit of entrusting their moneys.† The court, rather than share the odium with the parliament, devolved upon them and upon the state council the authority to distribute the loan. The parliament, however, would have no joint functions with the privy councillors, who gave way. It is not difficult to see that at this period, at least, the parliament was without political or subversive views. This separating their own interests from the other courts, as well as from the citizens, shows at once their narrowness and their simplicity.

This was at the close of 1644. In the following year the distribution of the loan and the levy of the remains of the *toisée*, kept up disquietude in Paris. Those aggrieved by the latter continued to collect and clamour in the halls of the Palace of Justice. The younger counsellors abetted them, and called for a general assembly to take into consideration the "reform of the state and the depredations of finance." And when the elder persisted in refusing their demand, the younger met to the number of ninety-five in the Salle St. Louis, and commenced debating. Mazarin could not tolerate this. The parliament was summoned to the Palais Royal to be reprimanded, and three judges, with the President Barillon, were arrested and conveyed to distant places of confinement.‡ (March 28, 1645.)

This act of severity had the effect of uniting the

* Mémoires d'Ormesson.
† Mad. de Motteville.
‡ Mémoires d'Ormesson and of Omer Talon.

parliament, and of flinging its chief judges into the same expressions of discontent with their younger colleagues. The victory of Nordlingen, which took place in the summer, however, rendered the court confident and fearless. The queen turned a deaf ear to all the supplications of parliament in favour of Barillon, who died in the fortress of Pignerol; and in September the young king was brought *en jaquette* to hold a bed of justice for the forcible registry of seventeen or nineteen fiscal edicts.

Notwithstanding the brilliant success of Rocroy at the time of Louis the Thirteenth's death, it was not followed up by proportionate results. Condé took Thionville, but was obliged to march into Alsace to succour and rally the army in those quarters, which had been demoralised by the death of Marshal Guebriant, and beaten, in consequence, at Dutlingen.* In Italy the French lost Tortona; and in Spain the disgrace of Olivarez led to fresh and vigorous efforts on the part of his successor to renew the war, and redeem the disaster of Rocroy.

The events of war carried Mazarin somewhat out of the line traced by Richelieu. That cardinal was for humbling Austria indeed, but still for maintaining the Catholic party in Germany with Bavaria at its head. It was the Bavarians, however, who in this campaign chiefly opposed the progress of Swedes and French; and it was against them that, in 1645, Condé and Turenne had directed the force of their battalions. Turenne at first suffered a check at Marienthal; on which Condé marched to his succour, and gave battle to the Bavarians under Mercey at Nordlingen. There were not more than 24,000 men of a side. The Bavarians held a village in the centre of their line, against which the French directed their first attacks. After a fierce struggle, the French were repulsed; and the Bavarians

* Vie de Guebriant, Mémoires De Turenne, De Montglat, Mercure Française.

CHAP. XXX.

ordered the cavalry of the right wing to follow up the advantage, by charging the French left under the Maréchal de Grammont. This was also successful, and seemed to secure the victory. But Turenne had been equally so on the other wing, and the Bavarians were sensibly checked by the death of their general, Mercey, who had fallen on the field. The Duc d'Enghien took the opportunity to bring up a reserve of Hessian troops, which renewed the battle in concert with Turenne. The Bavarians were driven in rout to Donauwerth with the loss of their cannon (Aug. 3, 1645).* This was the victory which checked the ardour of the young members of the Paris parliament; the news at the same time coming that Count d'Harcourt, who, in lieu of La Mothe, commanded the French in Catalonia, had been equally successful against the Spaniards.

The year 1646 was marked by more signal successes on the part of the Prince of Condé, who reduced Philipsburg, entered Cologne, and made himself master of both banks of the Rhine. The Duke of Orleans, in the same campaign, reduced Gravelines. In Spain, the French commander, La Motte, was not so successful, being obliged himself to raise the siege of Tarragona, whilst the Spaniards recaptured Lerida.

Whilst Condé was thus maintaining the ascendency of French arms, Mazarin was proceeding stealthily and slowly in his negotiations for peace. It was no easy task, despite the victories which seemed to facilitate it; the objects of France, however seemingly in accord, being really at variance with those of their allies. The aim of the French minister was of course to obtain the sanction of a treaty for the conquests of Richelieu. But Holland, however valuable the aid of France, could not have at heart the latter's extension to the Rhine. Its interests rather coincided with the desire of Sweden,

* Mémoires de Turenne, Montglat, Grammont.

which was to form a Protestant-German League, with itself at the head as sovereign of a German province, and thus keep the Catholics, both of South Germany and of France itself, in check. France, whilst joining Sweden and Holland in the aim of humbling the House of Austria, was for dividing the provinces and influence torn from Austria, with Bavaria, a Catholic power, rather than with Protestant Sweden. Had England then stood on its feet, its weight as a Protestant power would have been felt, interested too, as it was, in the full restoration of the Palatine. But England was nullified by civil dissension.

The treaty, known afterwards as that of Westphalia, was negotiated in two towns of that state, the representatives of the Catholic princes meeting at Munster, those of Sweden treating at Osnabruck. The French envoys, D'Avaux and Servien, spent 1644 at Munster; but their activity was merely shown in a circular to the smaller states and cities of Germany, begging them to send delegates to congress. To free these lesser states from the despotism of Austria, and render Germany really a federation, was one of the French aims. It was only in the last days of this year that each power made proposals—Austria to replace things as they had been in 1630, Spain to restore the arrangements of Cateau Cambresis; whilst France, bent on preserving its conquests, still shrank from the open demand to do so.* The commencement of 1645 was employed by France in attempts to win Bavaria to its views. The duke, however, refused to listen to any overtures until he was humbled by the defeat of Nordlingen. He then professed anxiety to treat; but no sooner did he become aware of the French demanding Lorraine and Alsace, with Philipsburg, and in fact, both banks of the Rhine, than his German pride revolted, and, turn-

* Bougeant, Histoire du Traité de Westphalie.

CHAP. XXX.

ing his back on the French, the Duke of Bavaria rallied more closely to the emperor.

Failing in this quarter, Mazarin directed his efforts to accomplishing a scheme that Richelieu had conceived, and which, though impracticable, his successor did not despair of. This was to induce the court of Madrid to cede the Low Countries to France in exchange for Catalonia and Roussillon. In order that Spain might make such a cession without disgrace, Mazarin was willing to receive the Low Countries as the dowry of the infanta, on her being affianced to Louis the Fourteenth. The cardinal was at the same time in negotiation with the Prince of Orange for a marriage of his daughter with the Prince of Wales, and a joint league in favour of the Stuarts against the English commons —a scheme that was foiled by the victory of Naseby.* But Mazarin not the less pressed the prince to favour the establishment of the French in the Low Countries, on the condition of Antwerp being assigned to himself. This idle scheme of Mazarin—idle, because the Spaniards were well aware how impossible it was for the French to keep Catalonia, so remote from them, and so exposed to the attacks of the Spanish monarchy —had but the effect of increasing the jealousy of the Dutch, and rendering them more inclined to what they afterwards concluded—a separate peace with Spain.

In order to support the scheme of Mazarin and the Prince of Orange, a French army under the Duke of Orleans invaded Flanders in 1646, the prince hoping to drive the enemy from Antwerp. He failed, and the expedition resulted merely in the capture of Mardyke. The Duke D'Enghien was more successful. He made himself master of Dunkirk in September, after a siege, which greatly added to his reputation. The advantage, however, was neutralised by its effects upon the Dutch,

* Von Prinsterer, Archives d'Orange Nassau, 2nd series, vol. iv.

whom it filled with jealousy and alarm of France. In another quarter the progress of the French arms, in conjunction with the Swedes, produced a result more favourable to a general peace. The allies drove the united Austrians and Bavarians from Suabia and threatened Munich itself. This compelled the Elector of Bavaria to make terms, apart from Austria, and come to an armistice with Sweden and France in the treaty of Ulm. (March, 1647.)

The repeated successes of D'Enghien and Turenne had rendered the imperial court more desirous of peace; and in 1646 Count Trautmansdorf was despatched to Munster with serious orders to treat. The count offered to cede Alsace, and even Brisach, provided the Duke of Lorraine was restored to his estates. They offered at the same time to reinstate the Palatine in the Lower Palatinate and create an eighth electorate in his favour. If France hesitated in accepting such proposals, it was because it felt the necessity of the Swedes being satisfied at the same time; and as they pretended to both Pomerania, as well as Mecklenburg and the bishoprics of Bremen and Verden, it was difficult to bring them to an accord with the imperial court.

Mazarin hoped that the efforts of his generals during the campaign of 1647 might facilitate negotiations. In this he was disappointed. The Prince of Condé, sent to redeem the renown of the French arms in Catalonia, was compelled to raise the siege of Lerida, which he had opened with bravado. Marshal Gassion was killed in Flanders and effected nothing. Whilst Turenne's strategy was marred upon the Rhine by the desertion and final breaking-up of the auxiliary army formed by the Duke of Saxe Weimar, Mazarin having no funds to pay them. This state of things revealed to the enemy the disorder of French finance, and the emptiness of its treasury.

The cardinal, however, looked forward to a great retrieval in Italy. His naval commander had conquered

CHAP. XXX.

for him the *presidie* as they were called, or ports of Tuscany and Elba, which served the Spaniards as points of communication between Milan and Naples. And in the latter city arose a series of insurrections against the Spanish viceroy, well known from the name of their momentary chief, Massaniello. The Duke of Guise, who had long wavered between a clerical and a military life, hastened thither to take the command, and serve French interests. A French fleet arrived soon after, but it was to show its jealousy of Guise rather than give its support; and it at last sailed away.*

The year 1648 opened in the midst of these uncertainties. Although the Swedes had become reasonable, and were content with half Pomerania, Mazarin still hesitated to accept the imperial propositions of peace, or to restore the Duke of Lorraine, which was the most unpalatable of these propositions to the court of the Palais Royal. But the Dutch would no longer wait upon the caprices of the French minister. They changed their articles of truce with Spain into articles of peace, and signed them in January, 1648, without the consent or sanction of France. Mazarin hoped to see himself master of Naples, when in the spring of the same year came tidings that the Spaniards had overcome the revolt, and put it down. Mazarin had not supported the insurrection as he might have done; but he was literally without resources. The French minister was somewhat consoled by a victory of Turenne over the Bavarians at Zumars-hausen, and still more by the battle of Lens, which Condé won in the same year.

Early in August the Prince of Condé (the Duc d'Enghien had succeeded to the title) had marched from Bethune to prevent Lens from being taken by the Archduke Leopold. Lens is a few miles north of Arras. Arriving too late, and finding that the town had

* Guise's Letters, MS. Dupuy, 775; MSS. Bethune, 9366.

surrendered, Condé withdrew his forces in the direction of Bethune. It was the 20th of August. The imperialist cavalry pressed upon the retreating French; and General Beck, who commanded it, obtaining permission to charge, did so with such effect, that he completely routed the rear-guard of the French. Condé turned his whole army to support it, posting his cannon on the height to check the advance of the Spaniards. These, nevertheless, followed up their first advantage; and in the shock that ensued between them and the first line of the French, which had faced about, the latter was as severely handled as the rear-guard, and driven back. But Condé brought up his second line in person to the support of his troops, rallying and manœuvring them with such steadiness and perfect generalship, that the Spaniards were unable to maintain the superiority they had just gained, and were in their turn repulsed. Their retreat was turned into a rout by Condé, who gained a complete victory, taking all the Austrian guns and baggage.*

The defeat of Lens was the signal for the Austrian plenipotentiaries to show themselves less obstinate at Munster and at Osnabruck; whilst Mazarin was not rendered more exigent by it, in consequence of the turbulent spirit shown by the judicial body and people of Paris.† The chief objection which Mazarin had to consent to the proffered terms, was the restoration of the Duke of Lorraine. But if he persisted in this, he would be under the necessity of continuing the war against the House of Austria without the support of the Dutch. To restore Lorraine, however, and to accept Alsace merely as a fief of the empire, seemed to the cardinal to endanger what he had most at heart—the extension of France to the Rhine. The imperialists, however, now ceded Alsace in full sovereignty, and promised never henceforth to interfere in

* Montglat, Grammont. † MS. Fontanieu, 490–1; MS. Dupuy, 775.

CHAP. XXX.

favour of the Duke of Lorraine. France was also to gain Philipsburg and the Brisgau; its frontiers not only touching, but passing the Rhine, by which the great aim of Richelieu in that direction was fully achieved. Sweden attained its desire of establishing itself as a German power by the possession of Bremen, Verden, North Pomerania, with Stettin, the Isle of Rugen, and Wismar in Mecklenburg. The Elector of Brandenburg got Magdeburg and Halberstadt as an indemnity for Pomerania. The Palatine recovered the lower palatinate of his dominions, and preserved his rank as elector.

The most important part of the treaty of Westphalia was the establishment and recognition of a Protestant North Germany in counterbalance of a Catholic South. The two religions were to be represented by equal numbers in the national diet, and nearly equal numbers in the imperial chamber or court of justice. The ecclesiastical property in the hands of Protestants during 1624 remained to them. Unfortunately for the cause of tolerance, Austria retained the right of expelling Protestant pastors and populations, on giving them due time to sell their property and arrange their emigration. France is certainly greatly to be thanked for the aid which she offered to religious liberty and Protestant establishments in Germany. Richelieu and Mazarin no doubt thought they were weakening Germany by means of religious freedom, and that they strengthened France by insisting on its religious unity. But whatever the political motive, the cardinals evinced an absence of religious bigotry very different from the sentiments which prevailed before, and came to prevail afterwards, in the French government.

The Peace of Westphalia was most opportunely signed. Had the imperialists been fully aware of the extent of the disorder which prevailed in the French government and capital, they would scarcely have made such large

concessions. The Spaniards, better informed, as well as more sanguine, held aloof and refused peace. But, indeed, Mazarin was not prepared to make those concessions, which could induce the court of Madrid to conclude it. He committed the same mistake which so many French statesmen had done, and raved of permanent conquests beyond the Pyrenees, as they had done beyond the Alps. He would come to no compromise respecting Catalonia; all he proposed concluding with respect to it being a truce. And as the Spaniards not only saw the resuscitation of troubles in Paris, but the probable defection of Holland from France, they preferred a continuation of the war to allowing their enemies a peaceful and prolonged possession of Catalonia.

Mazarin no doubt was wrong. After eleven years' continuance of the war with Spain, he could neither keep any province beyond the Pyrenees, nor yet exchange them for any important portion of the Low Countries: and the conclusion of the treaty of the Pyrenees might just as well have been come to in 1648 as it was in 1659. It may, indeed, be more than suspected that Mazarin knew this, but that he felt a state of war and of negotiation to be necessary to his influence and predominance. Of the statesmanship requisite for this he was master. The foreign policy of the country was his study; its aims, his occupation and his dream. To have all affairs of the kind swept from the scene, and to have reduced the French government to domestic administration and reform, would have at once placed Mazarin in inferiority to the secretaries he employed, or the negotiators he cajoled; so that the obstructions which he always threw, and was accused of throwing, in the way of peace, were in all probability, or at least in a great measure, calculated to prolong his authority and maintain himself as indispensable. This had been certainly the secret of Richelieu's hold of Louis the

CHAP. XXX.

Thirteenth. Perhaps it was the sole, as assuredly it was the great cause of Mazarin's influence with Anne of Austria and the young king, her son.

This prevalence of Mazarin's war policy was no doubt a great misfortune to France. It merely produced eleven more years of anarchy, weakness, and bloodshed, diverting the two great nations engaged in the strife from efforts at self-regeneration and reform, not impossible at that epoch. France could have had Roussillon and Artois just as well at Munster as on the Bidassoa; whilst the eleven years spent in the dilapidations, the ignorant and jealous tyranny of Mazarin at home, might have seen either the States General, or some similar effort of the different classes of the nation to introduce the principles of justice, of freedom, and of humanity, if not of tolerance, into its government.

French writers, however, join, almost all of them, in the apotheosis of Mazarin, because he signed the two treaties which extended the frontiers of France. And yet would not France have gained even far greater extension, if it had turned its intellect and its energies to the arts of peace, instead of wasting both in the continuance of a puny and contemptible war? Could the public men of France have established anything like free institutions, such as a citizen class must delight to join, they would have obtained not merely Alsace and Roussillon, but the Belgian provinces to the Scheldt, which were then and have been since averted and diverted from France, solely by the tyranny, the intolerance, and utter disregard of any liberal principle of government, which have marked the career of that people.

The French estimation of Mazarin seems thus to be grossly exaggerated in his favour, the meanness, nullity, and ignorance of his domestic administration being considered to be more than compensated by the glory and ability of the warrior and the negotiator. These, however, appear to have been completely thrown away.

They gained no more in 1660 than might have been secured twelve years previous. But they certainly acted as stepping-stones to the ambitious efforts of Louis the Fourteenth, which led the country still more astray into the labyrinth of expensive and bootless wars, not productive of any augmentation of territory worth noting, whilst attended by results the most degrading to humanity, bringing civilised man lower than he had ever been under any régime, and ending inevitably in those throes and convulsions of the unhappy country to right itself, which produced scenes of human misery and crime almost unequalled in the annals of the world.

Although the Paris parliament had been somewhat quieted in 1645, a papal bull, issued in the following year, infringing the liberties of the Gallican church, offered a new theme and fresh excitement to the younger members. Towards the close of that year Emery introduced a new tariff or high octroi on all commodities entering Paris, which he proposed extending to other towns. It affected wine and the necessaries of life, and set the people, as well as the better citizens who owned land and vineyards about the capital, in violent commotion. The parliament took up the question ; the minister declared that the tariff was not of their jurisdiction, and had it registered in the *cour des aides*. The judges declared the levy illegal, and the people of Paris, once more appearing with their old turbulence upon the scene, were determined to prevent it. Emery was obliged to give up his scheme, but he told the parliament that if he abandoned the tariff he must make demands more unpalatable to them, such as exclusive taxes on the rich, or the creation and sale of new offices of judicature.

Whatever may have been Mazarin's abilities as a foreign statesman, and as a counsellor to the queen in the treatment of courtiers and grandees, he was singu-

CHAP. XXX.

larly unskilful in his management of popular interests and the vital questions mixed up with them. He allowed Emery to propose taxes, which were indeed indispensable in order to make head against foreign foes, but which, from their nature, made more dangerous domestic ones. The absurd and fatal custom of raising money by the sale of places had of course created a multitude of placemen, every duty and function having its officer. When obstruction was thrown in the way of trade, and when land could with difficulty be bought by the citizen, and if bought was peculiarly taxed and ransomed, the savings of the middle class were vested in the purchase of place. They came thus to form a large functionary body, a bureaucracy, as the modern term expresses it. Richelieu, who saw the danger of such a class, strove to combat it, but so ineffectually that he only awoke its hostility to government. Mazarin, less influenced by views to humble any class, but impelled by great necessities, found, as he thought, this functionary body the only possessor of wealth and capital, and the only source from which they could be extracted. He might, perhaps, have succeeded in dividing classes, and so mulcting them, but in his ignorance or recklessness, the cardinal's proceedings affronted and provoked them all, and literally drove them to make common cause against him and against the regent. He first offended the parliament. In 1646 he created a new law court to take cognisance of the affairs of the royal domains. The judges were always menaced with seeing their profits divided, their salaries unpaid, and themselves punished for being refractory with exile or death. The wealthier citizens were oppressed by forced loans, or by the tax on the *aisés*, which, when not paid with sufficient alacrity, was enforced by quartering the king's archers upon the refractory, to harass and to plunder them.* Those of humbler savings were

* Ormesson.

beggared by the non-payment of the *rentes* on the Hotel de Ville; while Emery, by his tariff, pinched the pockets of the labouring poor, and drove them to shout against Mazarin.

Whilst the minister saw no remedy for such disorders, and the judges protested against him and them, there arose the state of things which De Retz has so powerfully described.

"At the murmurs of parliament the world awoke; and in awakening began to grope in the dark for the laws. They were not to be found; and there arose cries, questions, and affright. In the midst of the agitation men undertook to state and to explain what had hitherto remained in venerable obscurity. Truth became problematical, and to some alarming. The people forced their way into the sanctuary, and tore away the veil which ought to cover all that can be said or thought concerning the mutual rights of kings and peoples—rights which are best made to accord in silence. The hall of the palace of justice showed the first example of the profanation of these mysteries."

It would be tedious to enumerate the various fiscal edicts of 1647, with the remonstrances of parliament, and the efforts of court and cardinal to overcome opposition by compromise, cajolery or menace. On the first day of 1648 Emery announced more edicts, a loan of 150,000 livres on the rich, a new semestral parliament, provincial as well as metropolitan, a creation of numerous secretaries, greffiers, audienciers, and twenty-four new masters of requests. These were pleaders or younger judges in the grand council, which heard appeals from the king's *prévôté*, and ought to have been peculiarly attached to the court. But the new edicts flung the great council to fraternise with the parliament. To crown the disorder, the finance superintendent pressed for the ransom due on certain houses. The owners thronged to the hall of the parliament, and

CHAP. XXX.

meeting Emery's son, who was a judge, they hustled and maltreated him. Apparently to avenge this, an order of arrest was signed against two shopkeepers of the Rue St. Denis (January 12th, 1648). Marshal Schomberg, with some of the king's guards, was sent to effect the arrest. The persons sought were not found at home. But the population of the quarter mustering in agitation, mounted the church steeple and rang the bells, bringing a crowd into the street, which would have rendered the carrying off any captive impossible.* The circumstance brought the people to know their force and to take pleasure in showing it by collecting every night and making frequent discharges of arms, as if challenging the government.

The masters of requests were scarcely less noisy in their way, and as the parliament showed no inclination to register the new edicts, the king was brought on the 15th of January to enforce this ceremony in a bed of justice. Instead of giving a lesson, however, the young king received one. For Omer Talon, the procureur-general, told him in an harangue, "That his majesty, indeed, had no account to render of his acts, except to God and his conscience. But that, nevertheless, the greatness of a monarch consisted of his ruling over freemen, not over slaves. Most sovereigns admitted checks to their authority. Those who did not, ruled over ruined provinces and desert kingdoms." After drawing a fearful picture of the general distress, Talon bade the young monarch to triumph over his own luxury, and that of the court, and not over the patience of his subjects.†

From January to April the court made every effort, by relaxing some demands and pressing others, to obtain the sanction of parliament for some mode of

* Omer Talon, Guy Joly, Histoire du Tems, par Du Portael.

† All respecting the Maîtres de Requêtes, is told by Ormesson, who was one of them.

raising money. That body proved so little pliant, that the government resolved to punish them in a new arrangement of the *paulette*, the old one having just expired. The *paulette* was the annual portion of their salaries which they paid as a consideration for their holding their places in permanence and being allowed to sell them. It was now proposed to grant them this right on condition of their giving up four years' salary. This scheme of sweeping extortion made fully known in April, united all the judicial and other bodies, not only in the capital but in the provinces, against the government. The *cour des aides* led the way in proposing that all should unite, and others joined. As the grand chamber of the parliament hesitated, the government thought to stop the coalition by exempting the parliament from the four years' retention of salary. But as if the cardinal could not conciliate one foe without making another, he proposed to consider the public creditor as a functionary, and tax him too in his annual interest. The result was, that parliament refused the exemption in its favour, and joined the other companies in an *arrêt d'union* (May 10th)*, by which each body was to elect two deputies, who were to meet in conference in the Salle St. Louis. The establishment of what might become a formidable English parliament, as every functionary and body throughout the kingdom would rally to it, aroused the alarm of Mazarin and the anger of the queen. The one employed concessions, the other menaces. The decree respecting the *paulette* was revoked, but some members of the assembly were arrested, and the union itself prohibited by an order from the *conseil d'en haut* (June 10th). A few days later (June 15th), the parliamentarians answered by a resolve that their deputies should meet

* April 5—Ormesson, Talon, &c. In the *arrêt d'union* it was also resolved, not to receive any nominees to vacant offices, unless they had the consent of the widow and heirs. Journal du Parlement.

CHAP. XXX.

in despite of the prohibition. On the 16th some officers, sent from the Louvre to destroy or seize the act of union in the Archives of the Palace, were hustled and maltreated. The court then ordered the parliament to attend and bring the register. They came without it. The defiance was complete. Queen Anne herself, in a progress of devotional visits to the churches of Paris, was assailed with seditious shouts, reminding her of the example of Naples and of England.

Such insults inflamed the anger of the queen. She listened to Mazarin's arguments of the expediency of yielding with manifest impatience, and suspecting with truth that the cardinal's ignorance of French habits and law rendered him an unfit adviser in these matters, she consulted his enemies, Chateauneuf and Chavigny. Both these politicans considered the cardinal as lost. The companies were not likely to yield, nor was the prince able or inclined to force them. The Duke of Beaufort had escaped from the Bastille, and was rallying the old party of the Importants. Chateauneuf and Chavigny could therefore point out no mode of the queen's extricating herself from present difficulty except by sacrificing Mazarin. Monsieur, the Duke of Orleans, was equally averse to violence, and the queen in consequence submitted.

The good offices of the duke were accordingly employed to bring about a compromise; and he informed the chiefs that the members arrested would be released and their salaries not curtailed. These concessions were not received in the assembly of parliament with gratitude or welcome. The members refused to be silenced by the satisfaction of their private wrongs merely. They now aspired to play the popular part, to reform the state, and make the loan-mongers disgorge their ill-gotten wealth. Mazarin still counselled compromise, and on the last day of June it was announced to parliament that the king no longer opposed the assem-

blage of the union, provided it would instantly set about raising money to pay the army. "The submission of the court," says Omer Talon, "merely made the parliamentarians believe that it stood in fear of them and of a popular insurrection in Paris." They immediately returned to hold an assembly to the number of thirty-one, who, instead of bestowing the least attention to the queen's embarrassments, proceeded to make proposals that all royal intendants in the provinces, whether of justice, police, or finance, should be removed, and one-fourth of the *taille* remitted to the people. This was an appeal for support and adhesion to all provincial functionaries as well as the rustic population.

The parliament accepted these proposals, and put them in the shape of decrees. The queen did not demur, although the intendants, those creations of Richelieu, were the only hold that the government had over provincial revenues and jurisdiction. Mazarin abandoned them, and, as a natural consequence, Emery was removed from his post. Marshal de la Meilleraye succeeded him as superintendent of finance. The members of the union, in the Salle St. Louis, followed up this blow by passing a series of resolutions, twenty-seven in number, additional to those respecting the intendants and the *taille*. The most important of them formed indeed a declaration of rights, such as that no new tax was to be levied or office created without being debated and registered in the Sovereign Court of Justice and Finance. Article 6 is the French Habeas Corpus, which ordained that no one should be kept in prison more than twenty-four hours without being interrogated, and sent before the native judges. The same article abolished *lettres de cachet.**

Whilst the French judges and functionaries were

* Journal du Parlement, toutes les Chambres assemblées. One of the twenty-seven articles was to forbid the import of woollens and silks from England and Holland, as the native fabrics were declining.

CHAP. XXX.

thus beginning to play the part of the English parliament, the court was not able to pay the armies, nor even to find sufficient provisions for the king's table. When pressed by the minister, the assembly of union bade him get money from the loan-mongers, by seizing the revenues assigned to them in payment of their advances. These capitalists or *traitants*, as they were called, thus signalled out for sacrifice by the judicial and other bodies were not without friends or resources. Many of the courtiers were indebted and obliged to them. No sooner was Marshal Meilleraye declared superintendent of finance, very probably at their suggestion, when they went and offered him any advance of money for the court, provided he would put down the parliament. All except Mazarin liked the idea. He knew that there was no means of crushing the judicial body but through the army, and the Prince of Condé was master of that. To put down the parliament by his means, without previously coming to precise terms with the Prince was to transfer to him the whole authority of the government. Queen Anne could not but acknowledge the justice of this reasoning, which Condé's conduct in a visit paid to Paris fully corroborated. But there was no supporting the audacity of parliament and the university grasping at all authority, yet providing no funds. At the end of July the court determined to put an end to their sittings, and by a solemn ordonnance bade them cease, the king promising to call an assembly of notables to perform the duties they sought to monopolise.

The proposal but incited the unionists to persevere, and the parliament, no doubt aware that its chief antagonists at court were the *traitants*, named a commission on the 23rd of August to proceed to the accusation of four of the principal of these financiers. Those threatened, of course, bestirred themselves *, and, opportunely

* The inducements by which the *traitants* incited the queen and the marshal to act, are given in Ormesson's Mém. t. i.

for them, the news of the Prince of Condé's victory at Lens arrived immediately after. The queen and courtiers were eager to take advantage of it, the cardinal being alone reluctant. The *Te Deum* to be sung for the victory on the 26th was deemed too good an opportunity to be lost, as the troops would be in the city, and the people off their guard. Accordingly, towards the close of the ceremony, Comminges, an officer of guards, proceeded to arrest President Broussel, deputy with Lainé from the *grande chambre* of the parliament to the assembly of the union. Broussel, though seventy-five years of age, was still a most active and energetic denouncer of the court and the *traitants*, and on that account highly popular. At the news of his capture the mob collected, and as the carriage conveying him broke down, it was with great difficulty that Comminges could secure his prisoner. Marshal Meilleraye was obliged to advance and occupy the Pont Neuf, and so eager were the *traitants* to witness their victory, that two of the chief among them, La Rallière and another, accompanied him on the occasion. He met with considerable resistance, was assailed by stones and missiles, and a more serious riot would have taken place, had not the coadjutor De Retz issued from the archiepiscopal palace to his rescue.*

If superior intellect was to be adjudged by its manifestation through the pen, the coadjutor, afterwards Cardinal de Retz, would stand the foremost personage of his age. His memoirs evince the mind of a master, the writings of Mazarin that of a valet. Even Richelieu's confused argumentation appears poor stuff when compared with the shrewd remarks, the powerful appreciations, the eloquent effusions of De Retz. The two

* The account of the Barricades, given in the Journal du Parlement, says the troops were driven by the mob back to the Pont du Thuilleries, from whence they drew up in a line to within a hundred paces of the Palais Royal.

CHAP. XXX.

great cardinals were, however, prime ministers by virtue of their sovereign's choice, whilst De Retz, successively the gallant, the churchman, the demagogue, the partisan, sinks, by his want of purpose, and still more of success, into the rank of a mere intriguer. The coadjutor, after his energetic interference for the Marshal Meilleraye, went with him to the Palais Royal, to represent the danger of the crisis. The court mocked a prelate known to be of dissolute morals, and the queen even threatened him. Leaving her presence in anger, the coadjutor determined to pay his court to another power; and he proceeded to confess in the streets a man of the people, whom the Marshal de la Meilleraye had wounded in the fray. The act vastly augmented his popularity. As to the populace, no sooner did they learn that Broussel was definitively carried off, and that the queen would not liberate him, than they drew chains across the street, and in the course of the following day threw up numbers of barricades.* They consisted in general of a double row of wine barrels filled with earth, held together with chains, and supported by paving stones. The chancellor, undertaking to make his way through them, narrowly escaped with his life. In the midst of the trouble the parliament met, and determined to proceed in a body on the 27th to the palace, to demand the liberation of Broussel. Admitted to the royal presence, the judicial body could obtain at first no concessions from the queen. After a time, however, she consented that Broussel should be released, if the assembly of the union would cease to hold their sittings. The deputation set forth to return to the palace of justice to consider this. But stopped at the first barricade with the demand of whether they brought the liberation of Broussel, they

* Twelve hundred and sixty barricades were counted in Paris, twenty-five or thirty men behind each. The first barricade was erected at the Croix du Tiroir, which is now the fountain at the corner of the Rue de l'Arbre Sec. See Omer Talon, Régistres de l'Hotel de Ville.

could give no satisfactory answer. Wherefore the mob forced them, with President Molé at their head, to return to the Palais Royal. Many, however, ran away in alarm at the threats of the people. On their appearance the remaining judges, almost as much terrified as the court, consented to promise that in the debates of the assembly for a time they would avoid political topics. The queen in consequence ordered the liberation of Broussel. On the 28th this object of popular reverence returned, and was received with an exuberance of gladness and noise such as, says Madame de Motteville, had never welcomed a Roman emperor.

The triumph over the court and government satisfied the people for the moment, but did not secure the parliament. The more extreme councillors had gained authority there, and exercised it by impelling their colleagues to fresh demands. They insisted on continuing their sittings during the vacation, and thus giving the queen no respite. The carriage of that princess could not appear in the streets without clamorous insults being addressed to her, especially by the women of the Marché Neuf. The cardinal could not stir abroad. Even Marshal Meilleraye was obliged to bribe the river boatmen in order to make a party in his favour. To escape this durance the court left the Palais Royal for Ruel with the young king and his brother (Sept. 13), and had not the removal been stealthily effected, the populace would have prevented it.*

Mazarin had good reason for suspecting Chateauneuf and Chavigny of promoting this spirit of sedition, especially in the parliament. The former therefore was exiled to Berry. The latter, from being governor of Vincennes, was made a prisoner there. If the people were enraged at the abstraction of the king, the parliament was alarmed by these arrests. In the debates

* Omer Talon, De Motteville, De Retz, Ormesson.

CHAP. XXX.

on their illegality, one councillor proposed exhuming the old edicts of 1617, issued after the death of the Maréchal d'Ancre, declaring foreigners incapable of holding office in the kingdom. The approach of 4000 Swiss from the army of Condé, under D'Erlach, obliged the parliament and Paris to take measures of self-defence. At length Condé himself appeared; the Duke of Orleans joined him, and the queen and parliament both appealed to the prince. He declared himself desirous of supporting the royal authority, but Paris could not be reduced with 4000 men. He proposed mediating, not crushing. The parliament demanded no less than the validity of the bill of rights, drawn up in the meetings of the Salle of Saint Louis; and insisted upon none of its articles more strenuously than upon that which guaranteed individual liberty, and ordained that every person should be examined within twenty-four hours, and then put upon his trial or released. As this aimed at the liberation of Chavigny, or the bringing of special charges against him, the queen demurred. She was willing to leave the members of the parliament protected by the laws they proposed, but desired to have her authority unimpaired with respect to others. Condé, who interfered, and whose interest it was more than any one else to have such a French *habeas corpus*, showed not much zeal in its favour. He was willing to check and humble Mazarin, but not restrict the royal authority. What he especially desired was some financial arrangement that would satisfy his army. According to his wish a royal declaration was issued, in which a few of the demands of parliament were allowed, and some kind of financial settlement arrived at.

The royal declaration of the 24th October proclaimed that his majesty abandoned to his subjects one-fourth of the *taille*, amounting to ten millions, and to the Parisians and other citizens the greater portion of the

tariff. Similar concessions were made respecting the payment of the *rentes*. No new office was to be created or tax ordained for four years, nor after that time without being registered in parliament. Trade monopolies were abolished: trial by commission forbidden, and no causes evoked save by their legal judges. Those criminally inculpated were to be proceeded against according to the old ordonnance, and the magistrates of sovereign courts were not to be displaced by *lettres de cachet*. Thus were eluded, not confirmed, the decrees of the parliament against imprisonment without trial. This declaration, though it restored tranquillity for a time, was evidently too vague and too insincere to have a lasting effect. When the parliament re-opened its sittings in mid-November, the approach of some troops, which the prince had ordered to Paris, awakened the mistrust of the councillors, whilst Condé was equally displeased at his army remaining unpaid. At the sittings held in December for the interpretation and accomplishment of the articles of the declaration, the Prince of Condé and the Duke of Orleans were constantly present. And both, the former especially, were provoked by the tone of the members, who seemed to grudge supplies to his army, and who entertained distrust of his princely authority. The most effectual mode, it was evident, of making prince and parliament quarrel, was to procure his attendance at their sittings. Condé "mocked and insulted" the speakers, and was said to have shaken his fist or his finger at some of them.*

Condé therefore came in the last days of 1648 to an understanding with Mazarin, notwithstanding all the efforts of the coadjutor and others to enlist him on the opposite side. The prince's advice was to seize the

* An account of these sittings is only to be found in Ormesson, t. i, l. 589. De Retz and La Rochefoucauld concur in testifying that Condé was not won by party or interested motives, gifts, or promises, &c. But that he was at this moment disgusted with the parliament.

CHAP. XXX.

eastern portion of Paris, the Faubourg St. Antoine, the Bastille, and the arsenal, whither the king was to be brought. Advancing from this position with his artillery to sweep the quays, Condé promised to reduce Paris, its mob, and its parliament. Mazarin, however, disliked violence and bloodshed, and the prince, he thought, had not a sufficient number of troops. It was therefore resolved that the court should withdraw from Paris, which the army was to blockade and reduce by famine.*

On the 3rd of January, 1649, Twelfth Night, the prince and royal family fled from the capital to St. Germains, which was so unprepared to receive them, that most of them slept upon straw. A message from the queen to the parliament bade it withdraw to Montargis. The reply was, the armament of the civic guard. The army of Condé, to the number of 25,000, at the same time occupied St. Cloud, St. Denis, and Charenton. The parliament declared Mazarin *hors la loi*. It ordered large contributions, of which it furnished a million. The coadjutor, if one can believe his own account, was the chief mover in this revolt, and no doubt he was most active. Failing in his attempts to win Condé, he had secured his sister and brother; the first, the beautiful Duchess of Longueville, with her lover the Duke de la Rochefoucauld, and the Duchess of Bouillon established themselves in the Hotel de Ville. The Prince of Conti, Condé's younger brother, joined them. The Duc d'Elbœuf, the Duc de Beaufort, hastened to Paris, the citizens of which were soon masters of the Bastille. More important adherence was that of the provincial parliaments, especially of Provence and Normandy. Spanish agents soon started up with full credentials, offering to the Parisian chiefs the same aid which their monarch had lent to the League. In February, Condé made an

* Mémoires de Montglat.

attack upon Charenton, then garrisoned by the townsfolk. He easily drove them from it, but found the Parisians in such numbers between that village and Paris that he dared not persevere in his attack.

After this the parliament, not without protests from its leading judges, commenced to listen to the propositions of Spain, whilst the court, placing less and less confidence in arms, decided on convoking the states-general. They were summoned to meet on the 15th of March at Orleans, and letters for holding the election were sent to the different provinces.* The meeting was put off for a time, but the deputation of the noblesse met notwithstanding, though with scarcely any result or resolve that year.† Had there been sincere and intelligent patriotism in the Parisian leaders, they would have grasped at such a proposal, and might have paved the way for a representative assembly giving freedom to France. But their view for the moment seemed to be the exclusively personal one of expelling Mazarin from the confidence of the queen, and the counsels of France. They knew not at the time how firmly rooted the cardinal was in both. On the other hand, the name of the states-general was not popular: the remembrance of their frequent failure in France did not give confidence in them. Whilst the catastrophe to which the representative system in England had led, the decapitation of Charles, about the very time, under the dictatorship of the army, shook even that small degree of faith which might otherwise have been placed in a representative government. In the writings of the parliament, we cannot descry either knowledge or respect for representative or constitutional principles. Cardinal de Retz has expressed his ideas, which were that the monarch's power should be checked, not by classes or by bodies of men, but by laws. These once

* Journal de l'Assemblée de la Noblesse. † Ibid.

CHAP. XXX.

laid down, a monarchy otherwise absolute should only be restrained by the observance of them. It is the want, not of liberty but of law, that De Retz complains of. Fundamental rules, restrictive of absolute power in monarchs, he argues, always existed, and had merely been destroyed by tyrannical sovereigns like Louis the Thirteenth, or despotic ministers like Richelieu. Yet De Retz did not see how laws could emanate from another source than from the king, who should be the instrument to bind himself and his successors. Like the Deity, observes that writer, he should acquiesce for ever in what he originally ordained. When such were the principles of the leading spirit of the Fronde, those of President Molé himself, the most austere and liberal chancellor of the time, being probably of the same nature, there was little hope for the states-general, or prospect of a truly representative government.

De Retz bears testimony to the noble character and courage of Molé, who, whilst suffering himself to be carried away by the torrent when too strong, never failed to make a stand, when he could get his footing, on behalf of peace, of concord, and of the royal authority tempered by the laws. It is difficult indeed to descry any fixed public principle in his actions. During the early turbulence of the parliament he did his utmost to prevent its political meetings; yet, when compelled to be the spokesman of these, his harangues were bold and even democratic. He kept his position by going the whole length with the majority of the parliament, in order apparently, when the first opportunity offered, to separate the judicial body from the mob and reconcile it to the crown. The courage and honesty of Molé are undoubted; but we regret to say that he participated in the common want of all French public men of the age—principle.

Molé, like De l'Hôpital, was but too anxious to seize every opportunity to hasten or patch up a peace, with-

out sufficiently considering the basis upon which an accord might be permanently laid. When the contending parties in the great religious wars had exhausted their strength, De l'Hôpital used to intervene, in order to conclude what he called a peace, and they considered a truce. In like manner, now, when France and its capital, split into half-a-dozen parties, showed the utter inability of one or any establishing its predominance, President Molé came forward to defeat extreme designs and bring about an armistice. The government, which invested Paris with an army under command of the Prince of Condé and the Duke of Orleans, both for the present supporting the queen and Mazarin, who had given wide domains to the prince and large promises to the duke, was no doubt the strongest; for though unable to force an entry into the capital, well defended by its burgess guard, it sorely straitened the city for provisions. Within Paris was, as usual, a moderate and an extreme party; the former chiefly strong in the parliament, and led by its first president, but also comprising many of the respectable citizens, and the municipalty of the Hôtel de Ville. Opposed to them, and equally strong, from having with them the younger members of the parliament as chiefs, were the malcontent courtiers, male and female, the coadjutor, the Duke of Beaufort, the Duchesses of Longueville and Bouillon, the Duke de la Rochefoucauld—all making the same demand, the exile of Mazarin, and enthusiastically supported in this demand by the populace, who made of it a never-ceasing cry. The immediate hopes of the party were placed in the support of Turenne, who offered to come to their succour with the army which he commanded. This prospect it was which rendered the court more pliable; for Turenne not only brought himself, but the military resources of Spain to recommence civil war. To avoid such extremities, the moderates carried the

CHAP. XXX.

point of sending negotiators to the court at Ruel. It was vain to demand that Mazarin should be sent away. Far from this, Mazarin insisted that twenty-five members of the parliament should be exiled, that the political sittings of that body should cease, at least for a long period, and that it should repair to St. Germain's to make its submission to the king. The leaders and the popular masses of the *Fronde* unaccountably allowed the chiefs of parliament to negotiate in their name. Their astonishment was therefore great on learning that President Molé and his colleagues had thrown them over, and had concluded an accommodation, in which their interests and their name were altogether omitted; in which the parliament submitted to suspend its sittings and to appeal for pardon, whilst Mazarin remained not only minister but the actual signer of the treaty.

This accord, called the Treaty of Ruel, which Molé signed on the 11th of March, renewed the Declaration of October on the part of the court, the parliament promising to hold no more sittings. The Parisians were to disarm, deliver up Bastille and Arsenal. The government was at liberty to borrow money at 12 per cent. for its requirements. The prince and nobles then in Paris were to be freed from all consequences of their resistance, on declaring their adhesion to the treaty.*

Universal was the clamour that assailed Molé when he announced this treaty to the parliament. The Duke d'Elbœuf told him he had betrayed all the noble supporters of the parliamentary cause. Molé asked him in reply, "If he had not negotiated with Spain?" Still the president consented that the deputation should return to procure better security for the interests of D'Elbœuf and his colleagues. The people, however,

* The terms are in the Régistres de l'Hôtel de Ville, t. i.

within and without the Palais de Justice, shouted "*No Mazarin!*" and insisted that his name at least should be blotted out from the bottom of the treaty. This Molé was unable to grant; and, in refusing it, braved all the execrations and menaces of the populace. The coadjutor generously did his utmost to save him, whilst he received the reproaches rather than the thanks of Molé. "I have need of but six feet of earth," said the president. It was the fear of Molé's friends that this treaty would not only be contested in parliament, and scouted by the populace, but ill-received by the citizens, the Hôtel de Ville, and the burgess guard. On their conduct, indeed, everything depended. They at once disappointed the hopes of the factious. The Hôtel de Ville accepted the treaty; the colonels and captains of the national guard adhered*; it saved and confirmed the treaty, notwithstanding the arrival of a Spanish agent with promises of support from the archduke.

Thus terminated the first war of the Fronde, in a manner which answered the expectations of none concerned. The court had entered into it with the belief that siege and famine would exasperate the people, and turn them against the parliament.† This body, which had provoked it by its obstinacy, found the mob and the Frondeurs as harsh masters as Mazarin, and tried to shake them off by coming to an accord with the queen. It lost popularity in consequence, and the coadjutor, the Duke of Beaufort, and their friends, remained masters of Paris. The court dared not for a time re-enter it, the queen and Mazarin remaining at Compiègne, where the latter gave himself infinite pains to imitate Richelieu, in visiting, encouraging, and

* Letter of Saintot in Barante, Vie de Molé. See Régistres de l'Hôtel de Ville pendant la Fronde, t. i. p. 422, in note, for proof that the *six corps des marchands* were against the violence of the Fronde.

† Ormesson.

CHAP. XXX.

directing the army, which opposed feebly enough the progress of the Spaniards. That *haute noblesse* which usually formed the court seemed divided into two bands: some attached to the queen, and remaining at Compiègne, the others rallying to the Duke of Beaufort, and having, as the expression was, the *haut du pavé* in the capital. The queen's courtiers, not tolerating this, were wont to come to Paris in numbers, to the Tuileries' gardens, then a fashionable resort, or the *Taverne du Renard*, attached to them. Here, on one occasion, the Duke of Beaufort rudely disturbed some of these gallants, pulling the cloth off the table and expelling them. The queen desired parliament to avenge the insult. In reply, she was urged to let the matter drop, as the Duke of Beaufort could excite an insurrection in Paris any day.

The queen and cardinal were compelled to be less aggressive against the Frondeurs, from the circumstance that a coolness had arisen between them and Condé. The government of Champagne had, indeed, been given to the Prince of Conti, and the Duke of Longueville was promised another Norman fortress. But Mazarin had conceived a plan, which gave singular umbrage to the prince—that of marrying his niece Mancini to the Duc de Mercœur, eldest son of the Duc de Vendôme. Condé hated the Vendômes; and, moreover, the cardinal proposed giving the admiralty to the husband of his niece—a post which Condé sought for himself. The prince went off in dudgeon to Burgundy.

Mazarin resolved to try could he not find another successful commander. He placed Count Harcourt at the head of an army with instructions to take Cambray. The enterprise failed, through the defection, it was alleged, of Turenne's German or Alsatian troopers. Soon after, the Duke of Orleans, who longed for the gaiety, throng, and high play of the Palais Royal, brought the court to Paris, whither the queen gladly

accompanied him, in the hope of obtaining a grant of money from parliament. "The king was received," says De Retz, "as kings always are, and ever will be, with acclamations which signify nothing, except to those who desire to be flattered by them." The queen, and even Mazarin, were not ill-received, to their own great surprise, and to the mortification of the Duke of Beaufort and the coadjutor. These soon set to work, and it rained pamphlets against Mazarin, and even against the queen.

The cardinal might have braved this, but the prince became more and more hostile, more and more imbued with the ideas of his sister, the Duchess of Longueville, whom Queen Anne had but coldly received, and whose lover, La Rochefoucauld, was equally discontented with the court. But Condé, however irreconcilable to Mazarin, was also so to the Duke of Beaufort, and was in general of that haughty temper which made every one his enemy. A shot fired at his carriage warned him that he had enemies. Whether it was done by the Mazarinists or the Frondeurs, Condé attributed it to the latter, accused them before the parliament, and came to an open rupture. This did not render him less arrogant with the court or with the Duke of Orleans. The former gave Pont de l'Arche, at his desire, to the Duke de Longueville, though it rendered the duke almost master of Normandy, he having Rouen, Dieppe, and Caen besides. Still Condé was not satisfied, especially at the admiralty being reserved for the family of Vendôme. When Mazarin to his threats replied that he was not without supporters, even military supporters, Condé snapped his fingers in the cardinal's face, exclaiming *Adieu, Mars!* The Duke of Orleans, too, was ill pleased with the prince. He had long since asked a cardinal's hat for his favourite, the Abbé de la Rivière. Condé required it for his brother, the Prince of Conti. He could not even leave the queen

CHAP. XXX.

uninsulted. A mad courtier, named De Jarzy, was bold enough to pay his addresses to her. Inclined to punish him by mockery, it was found that Condé had the impudence seriously to support his pretensions; and the prince indulged in this outrageous behaviour towards the queen at the very time when he was passionately accusing the Frondeurs before the parliament for the attempt to assassinate him.

The queen and those who agitated the populace of the capital being thus both affronted and ill-treated by the prince, united against him. Their joint anger was increased, and that of the Duke of Orleans aroused by another arrogant and ambitious act of Condé. He aimed at getting possession of Havre, which was held by the Duchess D'Aguillon in the name of her nephew, the Duke of Richelieu. This young noble was destined by his aunt to espouse the wealthy Mademoiselle de Chevreuse; but he became inveigled by a certain Madame de Pons, neither young nor beautiful. The Prince of Condé not only favoured but sanctioned by his presence his marriage, with the view of hurrying off the duke to Havre, entering it with him, and obtaining the command. This intrigue, unworthy of Condé, offended every one, the queen, the Fronde, Madame de Chevreuse, the friends of Richelieu, and the Duke of Orleans. All combined to punish him. The coadjutor was to be made a cardinal, and the Duke of Beaufort to have the survivance of the admiralty, as the price of their damping the popular favour for the prince, who, with his brother, the Prince of Conti, and his brother-in-law, De Longueville, were accordingly arrested in the Louvre on the 18th of January, 1650, and conveyed to the fortress of Vincennes.*

A measure so extreme for Mazarin as that of the

* For the accommodations and quarrels between Mazarin and Condé, see chiefly Lenet's Memoirs amongst the numerous contemporary ones.

prince's arrest, was forced upon him, not merely by the immediate provocation of that grandee, but by the dangerous ascendency which he was gaining in the provinces. He was governor of Burgundy, his brother, Conti, of Champagne. The Duke of Longueville had almost all Normandy. The parliaments and people of Bordeaux, of Aix, of Languedoc and Provence, were in arms against their governors, who held for the crown. Immediately after the arrest of the princes, Mazarin and the queen proceeded to Normandy. They anticipated Madame de Longueville there; drove her from Rouen and Dieppe, and were able to entrust the royal authority in that province to the Count d'Harcourt. Mazarin and the queen then proceeded to Burgundy, where they met with equal success in the capture of Bellegarde. Condé was not prepared himself, nor had given instructions to his officers to resist the king. The court entered Dijon, and transferred the governorship of Burgundy to the Duke of Vendôme. The southern provinces were more difficult to reduce. They had always been at variance with Mazarin on the subject of taxation. The Bordelais had continued disputes with the Duke d'Epernon, who, to secure himself, had, in 1645, attempted to build a citadel at Libourne.* The Bordelais prevented the completion of the work, and laid siege to the fortress in their own city, the Château Trompette, whilst the Duke d'Epernon had been obliged to withdraw to his own mansion of Cadillac. After a two months' siege, the Bordelais took Château Trompette and rased it (October). The court had sent the Marshal du Plessis to bring them to reason, but this he could only do by ceding the greater portion of their demands. Such was the state of serious rebellion at Bordeaux when the Princess of Condé escaped from Chantilly, and flung herself into it. She was soon

* MSS. Hist. of Fronde, Bib. Imp. Sup. France, 1238.

CHAP. XXX.

joined by the Duke de la Rochefoucauld, who had mustered his family partisans of Poitou, and by the Duc de Bouillon, who raised the standard of rebellion to the court in the Gironde. Whilst De Bouillon's brother, Turenne, contrived with Spanish aid to collect another army at Stenay, so as to menace the northern provinces, and capture Le Catelet on the 15th of June, 1650.

Thus Mazarin and Anne, though triumphant both in Normandy and Burgundy, were threatened by armies from north and south. In Paris the parliament had recovered influence and popularity, the coadjutor and Beaufort losing both by their alliance with Mazarin. And the judges lent a favourable ear to the pleas and petitions of the Princess of Condé for the liberation of her husband. The Duke of Orleans, as usual, wavering, was gratified by the lieutenant-governorship of the north, whilst the king should proceed to pacify the south, and, at the same time, by the appointment of Chateauneuf, in lieu of Seguier, to be keeper of the seals.

Leaving the Marshal du Plessis to defend the capital against Turenne, the court reached Libourne, on its way to Bordeaux, in August. To a deputation from thence the queen replied, that she was willing to pardon the people of Bordeaux, and grant them fair terms, but ceded nothing to the rebellious dukes. It was more at Paris than at home that the Bordelais exerted themselves. The parliament of the one city was strongly supported by the adhesion of the other; and that of Paris, resuming authority, pressed the Duke of Orleans so strongly to interfere, that he did so, and sent propositions of peace almost over the head of the court. But Marshal Meilleraye, who commanded the royal troops, took the suburb of St. Suaire by assault, and the Bordelais found it necessary to treat. The Dukes of Bouillon and La Rochefoucauld came, and had an interview with Mazarin in the camp before Bordeaux. The

city submitted on receiving an amnesty, with the recall of D'Epernon from being governor. The Princess of Condé retired to Montrond, and the court made its entry into Bordeaux in October.* The government thus successful in the south, the Marshal du Plessis was no less over Turenne and his Spanish auxiliaries, whom he completely defeated at Rhethel in December. There were not more than 10,000 of a side, chiefly horse. The defeat of Turenne established the superiority of the French in Lorraine.†

Success generally abated the circumspection of Cardinal Mazarin. Like Richelieu, he put faith in his armies and his generals, but mistrusted and neglected those who were more peculiarly his rivals in statesmanship and diplomacy. Of these, the coadjutor, De Retz, was the foremost. The queen had not scrupled to receive the factious ecclesiastic, nor Mazarin to make use of him in quieting Paris after the arrest of the prince. But both shrank from paying the price which was to make the coadjutor cardinal. Mazarin knew that De Retz was ambitious of the red hat as necessary to his becoming minister, and did not conceal his reluctance to fulfil his promise. De Retz immediately turned against the ungrateful court, and drove into opposition not only his brother Frondeurs, but the flexible Duke of Orleans, over whom he maintained the chief influence. Their first design was to get possession of the captive princes by stratagem, the advance of the Spaniards towards Paris affording the opportunity and pretext. But the cardinal was vigilant, and removed the prisoners, first to Marcoussi, near Montlhery, and then to Havre, where they appeared safer from Spaniards or Frondeurs. The party for their liberation merely became stronger. The Duke of Orleans, the parliament, an assembly of the noblesse that the duke had convoked, the Frondeurs,

* Memoirs of Maréchal du Plessis and of Turenne.

† Mémoires de Lenet, La Rochefoucauld, &c.

CHAP. XXX.

all embraced it, the latter especially entering into an agreement with the friends of the family of Condé to set him free, and drive Mazarin into exile. There were not wanting among the Frondeurs personages who warned Mazarin of his danger; and La Rochefoucauld, in particular, advised him strongly to anticipate his foes by setting free the princes himself, and thus become entitled to their gratitude rather. than exposed to their enmity. But Mazarin could not bring himself to free Condé, or to believe that the cabal against him could become so irresistible. The Maréchal du Plessis counselled him to bring troops to Paris, and keep the city in subjection by these means. But Mazarin feared that such a step would only augment his unpopularity.

The campaign, which was to end in his expulsion and in the liberation of the prince, had commenced in the parliament at its opening in November 1650. Speeches and debates succeeded each other. The tidings of the victory of Rethel did no more than suspend them for a few days. These debates always ended in the addressing remonstrances to the queen on the prolonged captivity of the prince. The Duke of Orleans, whilst countenancing the parliament, still kept at first on some terms with the court. Until on the last day of January (1651) Cardinal Mazarin ventured to expostulate with him on the conduct of the parliament and of the coadjutor, who reminded him, he said, more of Fairfax, Cromwell, and the English parliament, than of French magistrates and assemblies.*

The Duke of Orleans, either really piqued or pretending to be so, burst into strong expressions of passion, and declared he would not trust himself at court

* Mazarin, in one of his letters, relates a conversation of De Retz, in which the coadjutor said, "M. de Beaufort is Fairfax; I am Cromwell." (Ravenel's collection.) For the disputes, see Omer Talon, Journal du Parlement, Guy Joly, De Retz, &c.

with Mazarin again. The coadjutor was employed to acquaint parliament with the opinions which the cardinal had expressed of them. They were greatly incensed, and it was proposed to issue a decree for arresting him. The Duke of Orleans favoured the project. He took a more significant step in ordering Marshal Schomberg and the Duke of Epernon, who commanded regiments, to obey him as lieutenant general, not the cardinal as minister. The queen tried to gain the municipalty. In vain. Mazarin was so unpopular, that the prospect of getting rid of him raised every class into acclamation. Even in the palace Mazarin's enemies did not conceal themselves. The keeper of the seals, Chateauneuf, represented his departure as the only means of safety. Meantime the Maréchal Grammont had been sent by the court to Havre to negotiate with the prince. Condé, to the minister's offer of liberation, replied, by the cool observation, that "were it done at once *perhaps* he might be grateful." At last, on the 6th of February, the cardinal took the resolution to leave the queen. His purpose was to proceed to Havre, and himself liberate the prince after an interview; but though he brought a royal letter, the governor, De Bar, would not acknowledge his authority; and the cardinal, entering the fortress, found himself thus at once almost as much a prisoner as Condé. Meantime Paris became tumultuous. The parliament demanded the immediate liberation of the prince after passing a decree of exile against Mazarin. The Duke of Orleans refused to come to court without the Prince of Condé; and learning that the queen had some intention of making her escape from Paris, with the young king, he placed the burgess guard under arms, and made the queen, in fact, a prisoner. The suspicions of the mob, lest she should escape, were only allayed by her suffering the people to penetrate into the bedroom of the king, where

CHAP. XXX.

they found him asleep. This not only pacified but affected those who witnessed it with some feeling of loyalty and of regret at filling the palace with disorder and panic.*

Completely at the mercy of those leagued against her, the queen could but send orders for the unconditional liberation of the princes. Mazarin had not even the power to be the instrument of this act of grace. He was but the witness of their departure for Paris, whilst he himself took the road to exile, and finally settled at Bruhl near Cologne. The prince entered the capital in triumph (February, 1651). The queen confined to her bed with moral suffering, received them as lords of the hour. They might have rendered themselves more permanently so. It would have been easy, writes La Rochefoucauld, to deprive the queen of the regency, and transfer it with the guardianship of the king to the Duke of Orleans. No one would have resisted the proposal. But the prince was either too dazzled by his liberation and his triumph, or was too jealous of the Duke of Orleans, then one of the heads of the Fronde, to transfer the regency to him. Condé himself observed on a similar occasion that he was not a Duke of Guise. Queen Anne, too, made him the most advantageous offers. And Condé had the weakness to deliberate between accepting them or keeping the promises made to the Frondeurs for aiding in his liberation.† Private reasons induced him to be false to these promises. The principal of which was the marriage of the Prince of Conti with Mademoiselle de Chevreuse. This was most distasteful to Madame de Longueville, and would be destructive of the complete influence she wielded over her brother, Conti. Her solicitations, therefore, coincided with the efforts of the queen to break off the match, which Condé not only did, but caused it to be

* The memoirs of the period in the Michaud collection. MSS.

† La Rochefoucauld. Fontanieu, 490–1.

very ungraciously announced at a moment when he thought his hold of the court complete. This flung the Frondeurs once more into variance and enmity with Condé, who by similar weakness disgusted the Duke of Bouillon and Turenne. The prince's behaviour to President Molé was as reckless and ungrateful. And he incurred all this hostility without being certain of the court.

Anne of Austria, could she have shaken off Mazarin, and guided herself by her own counsels, would probably have encountered less difficulties than her obsequiousness to the cardinal brought upon her. As soon as she saw the schism widen, to which she contributed, between Condé and the Frondeurs after the return of the former, she felt the expediency of joining cordially with one or the other, and of either granting all the prince's demands in order to make him a sure ally, or of forming a new league with the Fronde and the coadjutor for punishing and putting down the prince. Consulting Mazarin on the subject, that wily personage counselled and dissuaded both, and advised the queen to intrigue with two parties, whilst closing with none. The cardinal's correspondence indeed betrays the meanest personal jealousies of all and every one, even of those who served him most faithfully, and one can easily understand, after the perusal of his letters, the observation of the queen, that the cardinal enjoyed her friendship far more than her esteem.*

The queen's first idea was to satisfy the prince, and having, as she thought, done so, she dismissed Chateauneuf, the confidant of Madame de Chevreuse, of the Fronde, and of the Duke of Orleans, giving the seals to Molé. Chavigny at the same time was restored to be secretary of state. This arrangement, although pleasing to the Prince of Condé, who saw in Chavigny's

* Lettres du Cardinal Mazarin in Ravenel's collection.

CHAP. XXX.

appointment the permanent exclusion of Mazarin, was highly offensive to the Duke of Orleans and the Fronde. They met in anger. The Duke of Orleans was ready to sanction any violence. And the coadjutor proposed nothing less than a popular insurrection, to force the palace and restore Chateauneuf. But the Duke of Beaufort, as well as Condé, who had been called to their council, deprecated any such violent measures. Condé declared himself good for nothing in a popular tumult, and, declining to take part in or sanction it, completely defeated the rash design.

The queen having been thus restored, through the secret support of Condé, to the full exercise of her authority—for not only was she able to dismiss or disown ministers and appoint others, but the Parisians ceased to mount guard or take precautions against the court's departure—the prince demanded the execution of the promises made to him. The queen would have acquiesced, but the most urgent letters arrived from the cardinal at Bruhl, counselling and beseeching her not to make such enormous concessions as would transfer all power to the House of Condé. Mazarin has himself enumerated these concessions—Condé and Conti were to be allowed "to exchange the governments of Champagne and Burgundy for those of Guyenne and Provence, still retaining Bellegarde and the fortresses of the provinces ceded. Thus, possessing the towns of Champagne, they might communicate with Flanders and Germany, by Bellegarde with Franche Comté and Savoy, by Guyenne with Spain itself, and by Provence with Naples, Italy, and the Mediterranean; whilst Damville governing Lorraine, La Rochefoucauld Poitou, Montansier the Angoumois, Grammont Bearn, Condé would be master of half the kingdom.*

In consequence of Mazarin's representations the queen

* Mazarin's Letters, Ravenel.

hesitated to execute this large transfer of authority to Condé. She granted him the government of Guyenne indeed, in lieu of Burgundy, an important boon, but to this she limited her concessions. Condé in consequence sought to soften and regain the Duke of Orleans. The latter professed the greatest objection to Molé as chancellor; Condé obtained the revocation of the appointment, and the seals were given to Seguier. The coadjutor, however, kept alive the resentment of the duke as well as of the Fronde against Condé. And Anne was sufficiently alarmed by the prince's menacing attitude to recur once more to the chiefs of the Fronde. De Retz had an interview with her, in which she offered him the apartment of Mazarin at the Palais Royal and the place of prime minister. Mazarin preferred even this to putting all power into the hands of Condé. De Retz, however, did not think fit to accept, and gave excellent reasons for not doing so. He preferred the restoration of Chateauneuf. He also proposed to take the life of Condé rather than arrest him. The queen shrank from the audacious act. When Condé had been urged on his return to proceed to extremities against Anne, he replied, "I am not the Duke of Guise." Anne now repaid his generosity by showing that she was not Catherine of Medicis. She consented to arrest, not slay him. De Retz was compelled to be satisfied, but all that he foresaw took place. Condé, perceiving his liberty was aimed at, first withdrew to St. Maur, and thenceforward was too invariably accompanied to permit of his arrest. He accused before the parliament the secretaries of state, Lionne, Servien, and Letellier who, indeed, had been the instruments to negotiate with him and deceive him, but whom he now denounced as the creatures of Mazarin. Anne thought it prudent to dismiss them, in order to soften the parliament; but she at the same time sent away Chavigny. She then met Condé with his own weapons, and denounced him

CHAP. XXX.

to parliament, as having treated with the Spaniards whilst pretending hostility to Mazarin, and making use of his forces and fortresses in the north against the king's interests, not in defence of them. Condé met this accusation by denial, and by bringing Monsieur's attestation of his innocence. But the two parties did not trust to wordy arguments, largely as they employed them not only by mouth but through the press. Condé and the coadjutor prepared to dispute ascendency in the *Palais de Justice* and in the streets by the number of their partisans. Each came to the parliament with an armed following that completely filled its halls and approaches. On the 21st of August these two armies, for they were no less, found themselves in each other's presence in the great hall outside the *grande chambre*, where the parliament was assembled. The Prince of Condé, after taking his seat, expressed his disgust that any one dared dispute his superiority (the *haut du pavé* as he called it). The coadjutor replied that the king was superior to them all, and his majesty had the best right to the *pavé*. "I will make *you* quit it," rejoined the prince. "You 'll find it difficult," observed the coadjutor. This seemed the signal for strife. Both parties arose, and those without drew their swords. The chief judges instantly flung themselves between the coadjutor and Condé, praying the latter especially not to make the Palais de Justice the scene of carnage. They entreated him to command his armed followers to withdraw, to which the prince assented, and begged the Duke de la Rochefoucauld to see to it. When the latter arose to give the order, the coadjutor sprang up too to make his own friends also withdraw. He passed out of the great folding doors before La Rochefoucauld, and, having given the command for withdrawal, the coadjutor put one foot within the doors to return, when the Duke de la Rochefoucauld closed them upon him, holding his head within them, leaving his body without,

CHAP. XXX.

and calling to Coligny and Ricousse, followers of Condé, to despatch De Retz with their weapons. In the previous age, the deed would have been done at once; but assassination was not the law or licence of the time. A more vulgar assassin was ready to strike, but his attention was distracted and his aim baffled. The coadjutor was able to resume his seat, and his first words were to accuse La Rochefoucauld of attempting to assassinate him. "It will be little matter what befalls a traitor," retorted the duke. "Ho, ho, La Franchise!" exclaimed De Retz, addressing La Rochefoucauld by this nickname; "between a poltroon like you and a priest like me, there is no danger of armed conflict." *

Condé saw there was nothing to gain from conflicts like these. However he might have withstood the coadjutor, aided by the court or the parliament, he was no match for De Retz in the streets. The moment of the young king's majority was approaching, which could not but add to the authority of the government, carried on no longer in the name of a regent, but in that of the monarch himself. Mazarin, he saw, still maintained his influence, and, with the connivance of the Fronde, would soon return. Calling a council of his friends at Chantilly, and exposing to them the state of his affairs, they and he unanimously resolved to have recourse to arms, and raise the standard of rebellion † (Sept. 1651).

The narration of wars engaged in between countries struggling for existence or predominance is fraught with interest, as are civil wars between classes, each fighting for a principle. But a struggle like that which closed the Fronde between the Prince of Condé and Mazarin, the latter aiming merely at the resuming of his authority over the government of the queen, the

* La Rochefoucauld seems to say he spared the coadjutor, though affirming how justly he might have been put to death. De Retz recalls the epithet of *poltron*.

† Lenet, La Rochefoucauld, &c.

CHAP. XXX.

former considering that nothing but his rising in arms could save him from spoliation and arrest, can have little interest, save for those curious in strategy, and pleased to learn the details of campaigns fought between a Condé and a Turenne.

History has perhaps never presented the picture of a great country in such a complete state of agitation and anarchy, without any of its personages or parties entertaining any fixed views or principles for the public good. Men struggled for advancement, authority, wealth; women for their lovers or for their marriage; the great bodies of the state for their corporate interests; but a high disinterested feeling seems never to have influenced the minds of any, or even occurred to them as a decorous pretext; for it must be admitted that the personages of the Fronde are frank and open in telling their own story. As to the opinions of the age, we have them in a thousand pamphlets *, and they are of all kinds and colours, from the worshippers of absolute monarchy to the abettors of popular massacres. But though all rise into passion, none show the seriousness of a conviction. Moral, religious, political belief were all wanting. The anarchy of the body politic was but the counterpart of that of the national mind.

Yet there were here and there gleams of wisdom and efforts, even joint efforts, which might have led to better things. When the arrest of the prince, so soon after the royal declaration, was made known throughout the kingdom, the members of that assembly of the noblesse which had met for a short time in 1648 came together at the Marquis de la Vieuville's on the 4th of February 1651, to consider the interests and security of their order. They complained "that while ecclesiastics

* The several collections of the pamphlets by the Fronde, and styled Mazarinades, in the libraries of the Arsenal, St. Geneviève, and Bibliothèque Impériale, amount to hundreds of volumes.

were only amenable to ecclesiastical judges, a provost, or the smallest presidial judge, was in the habit of trying nobles daily, and pronouncing upon their interests. Nobles, too, had been made subject to the *taille* like the peasant, whilst they were not, like him, exempt from *ban* and *arrière-ban*, and not at liberty to exercise trade or profession."*

As rumours of this meeting and reports of such speeches reached the provinces, eighty gentlemen of La Perche demanded to attend by *procuration*, that is, to elect deputies. This, after some demurring and debate, being accepted, there collected in Paris, either of the great nobles or deputies from the lesser nobles or gentry, upwards of 800, whom no hall could hold but that of the convent of the Cordeliers. Here they met and divided themselves into eight provinces, but resolved to sit and vote equally, without any distinction of rank. One of their first resolves was the necessity of convoking the states-general, and they sent a deputation to the assembly of the clergy for its concurrence in the recommendation. The clergy, nothing loth, adhered, the Bishop of Comminges propounding that as there were four elements in nature, so there should be in the state. King, nobles, and clergy were fire, air, and water. But the earth, that is the *tiers état*, was required to complete them. The parliament was wroth at this speech, and indignantly complained of being left out of the elements. The Count of Fiesque, however, gave a better reason for convoking the commons, which was that they alone could secure and see to the payment of the public creditors and of the army.

The Duke of Orleans at first extended his patronage over the assembly of the noblesse, and screened it from the vindictiveness of court and parliament. But when the prince was liberated, and when Condé found it

* Journal de l'Assemblée de la Noblesse.

CHAP. XXX.

necessary to pay court to the parliament, they both, false to their interests, as La Rochefoucauld expressed it, resolved to put an end to this meeting of the different orders. They did not, indeed, at once declare against the assembly of the noblesse, and their demands. On the contrary, the former obtained from the queen the promise that the states-general should be summoned even before the king's majority, which was to take place in October. And the Maréchal de l'Hôpital was empowered to announce this to the assembly. But the princes were soon alarmed by the representations of their adherents of the danger of convoking the states-general. The coadjutor dreaded them no less than Mazarin, and it was easy to adduce expressions which the Paris democrats poured forth in their pamphlets, most menacing to grandees. The princes therefore joined the court in adjourning the convocation of the estates, or limiting it to a summons addressed to a few bailliages.

Yet if the queen was thus to be left with uncontrolled authority as regent, or as queen mother, after the king's majority, (he was declared to be so at thirteen years of age,) it was plain to perceive that she would recall Mazarin at the first opportunity. In all the negotiations this was what she invariably arrived at, so much as to convince a great number of her contemporaries that there was some closer link between them than the political ability of the cardinal could account for. That they were secretly married was a very general belief, though certainly not proved. Yet the supposition is the readiest way of solving her attachment to him.*

* The Duchess of Orleans is the only writer who asserts the marriage of the queen and Mazarin. French writers of the present day adopt this opinion, which they corroborate by fine-drawn conclusions from Mazarin's letters. The conclusion should, I think, be the other way. Had the marriage taken place, the letters could not but have contained more proofs. Besides, Mazarin admitted hostility to the queen, and

CHAP. XXX.

Although the Prince of Condé had made great preparations for the war, by amassing money and troops, and securing the alliance of Spain, he still entered upon it with reluctance. Not that the sentiment of loyalty, before and after his time so much exaggerated, had great influence with him. He had rights as well as the king, and the government, he knew, had no respect for them, but would consign him to prison without trial, and keep him there as long as it was their interest or caprice to do so. His friends and family were obnoxious to the same treatment, and their safety even more than his own prompted him to raise the standard of revolt.

On the 5th of September 1651, Louis the Fourteenth declared himself of age to his assembled parliament. The queen on the occasion gave the seals back to Molé, recalled Chateauneuf as president of council, and gave the finances to the veteran minister, Vieuville.* After a council of his friends, held at Chantilly, Condé, with his sister and adherent, the Duchess of Nemours, and La Rochefoucauld, departed for Bourges and from thence to Bordeaux. At Bourges the court sent to make offers of a kind of truce, which he declined. One new and great source of strength accruing to the court, Condé did not sufficiently take into calculation. This was the influence of the king's name, and the personal appearance of the young monarch at the head of his armies. The people of Berri and citizens of Bourges, who received Condé and his friends at first with favour, no sooner learned the king's approach than they hesitated. And on the royal officers promising that the great tower should be demolished, the citizens of Bourges welcomed Louis the Fourteenth and his mother within their walls, celebrating his advent by the

her influence in these latter days is scarcely reconcilable with the marriage. The man with the iron mask was supposed to be the issue of this marriage.

* Colbert's letters.

CHAP. XXX.

destruction of the "tower." Condé withdrew to Guyenne, which was his government, and where he proposed awaiting the succours from Spain. It promised 5,000 men in the south, 4,000 in the north, 500,000 livres immediately, and a monthly stipend.*

Condé was not only master of Guyenne, but might have deemed himself equally powerful over the countries between Garonne and Loire, the nobles of the region, the La Rochefoucaulds, Tremouilles, Rohans, being all in his favour. The Count de Dognon, representing the Brézés, brought the coast, including La Rochelle, Rhé, and Brouage. Condé marched thither to render his conquest more secure, and succeeded in capturing Xaintes. He then laid siege to Cognac; but Count d'Harcourt appearing with the royal troops, obliged the prince to raise it. This reverse apparently encouraged the Rochellois to declare in favour of the king, and Condé soon found himself confined to the limits of the Gironde and the Dordogne. Even there his authority was not peacefully acknowledged. Bordeaux was split into factions, and the prince's own adherents fell asunder. Agen rebelled against him, and he declared himself sick of the southerns, who showed so much more alacrity in sedition than in battle.

If Condé was depressed, Mazarin was equally elated by the manifest superiority which attended the king's presence and his arms. The cardinal proposed returning, and he was the more incited to take this bold step from the circumstance of the queen's deprecating and objecting to it, as likely to increase her difficulties and multiply her enemies.† She bade him rather proceed to Rome.‡ Such advice struck him as the forerunner of disgrace, and braving all risks he collected what funds and forces he could rally, and at the head of them entered France

* Lenet, &c. † Madame de Motteville.
‡ Brienne conveyed to him this message.

(Dec. 24th, 1651). The parliament immediately fulminated a decree against him, promising a large sum to whomsoever would bring him alive or dead, adding, what was equally painful to him, the immediate sale of his library. But they followed it up by no other measure, and the proposal made by the Duke of Orleans, to levy troops and devote the public money to the purpose, was negatived by fears that such a step would necessarily leave the *rentes* of the Hôtel de Ville unpaid.* And Mazarin, passing without difficulty the rivers and the towns which lay between him and the court, two of the counsellors of parliament sent to oppose his progress being, the one killed, the other taken prisoner by the Maréchal d'Hocquincourt, rejoined it at Poitiers in the last days of January, 1652.

The cardinal would not have taken so bold a step, without something more to depend upon than the reverses of Condé and the attachment of the queen and king. In former times he had depended upon his equals or elders in age, courtiers, ministers, or secretaries. He had been deceived and ill served by all. By this time, however, young men had grown up under the cardinal's patronage, more zealous and more true to his interests. Of these, two of the most remarkable names were Colbert and Fouquet. The former, manager of the cardinal's private fortune, kept still a keen and vigilant eye to the public interests of his master.† There were two brothers of the name of Fouquet, one an ecclesiastic, the other attached to the parliament as procureur-général. None served him more zealously than these brothers, or were more efficient in making a party for the cardinal, even in the very midst of his most ferocious enemies of the parliament and the little court of the Duke of Orleans.‡

* Omer Talon.

† See for Colbert the memoirs of the Abbé Choisy.

‡ Mazarin's letters to the Abbé Fouquet. Cheruel's Memoirs of Fouquet.

CHAP. XXX.

Mazarin was thus led to count upon diminished hostility to him in Paris. Then he reckoned at the least upon the neutrality of De Retz, bound to it by the promised prize of the cardinal's hat, which indeed he received soon after at the hands of the Pope, not, however, without having escaped, numbers of times, assassination from the agents of La Rochefoucauld and the princes. His elevation in rank was, like that of most democrats, the ruin of his influence. His new dignity at once excluded him from the parliament. The Fronde itself no longer looked to De Retz, from whom the Abbé Fouquet succeeded in detaching even the ladies of Chevreuse.

It was in the field, however, that the triumph of one party over the other was to be secured. Until Mazarin's arrival the court had certainly the advantage. His coming altogether reversed this state of things. The Duke of Orleans became decidedly hostile, allied with Condé, and withdrew from the royal army half a dozen regiments.* At the same time the Duke de Nemours brought from the Low Countries a Spanish auxiliary force, with which he had the audacity to pass the Seine at Mantes, within a few miles of Paris, and then united with the troops of the Duke of Orleans to take post between Seine and Loire, placing the royal army on the latter river between two hostile forces.

This rendered it indispensable for the court and the Mazarinians to get possession of the towns upon the Loire. Their population, however, displayed the greatest aversion to the cardinal. The Duke de Rohan held Angers against them, and Mademoiselle, daughter of the Duke of Orleans, forcing her way most gallantly into Orleans by the favour of the lower populace, against the will of the burgesses, maintained this city in the interests of her father and of Condé. Marshal Hocquincourt succeeded in making himself master of

* Memoirs of Mademoiselle.

Angers. But the royal army would never have been able to make head against the prince, had not, for its good fortune, Turenne arrived to offer his services, which were instantly accepted. His first act was, indeed, injudicious. The court, protected by the breaking down of all the bridges over the river, was journeying along its southern bank. Turenne, by way of bravado, restored the passage of the bridge of Jargeau. The Duke of Beaufort attacked and would have carried it, but for a barricade hastily erected and desperately defended by Turenne and his officers. Had Beaufort pressed on, Turenne admits, he might have captured king, cardinal, and court. Reports of these military events soon informed Condé that the business and the fate of the war were not upon the Gironde but upon the Loire. Leaving his forces on the former river, the prince undertook to pass in disguise through his enemies, so as to reach the army of Nemours and Orleans.* The army of the Fronde soon felt its new commander, who beat in Marshal Hocquincourt's quarters at Bleneau on the 7th of April, and put his cavalry completely to the rout. There were, however, but from five to seven thousand men of a side. To have completed this destruction of Hocquincourt's army would have left the court at the prince's mercy. This Condé sought to effect, but was baffled by the able manœuvres of Turenne, who, at the head of 4000 men, withstood the prince with 12,000, not allowing him any opportunity of attack, save at a great disadvantage. Soon after, the Prince of Condé quitted the army for the purpose of making the capital declare itself more decidedly. Notwithstanding the hatred borne to Mazarin, the Maré-

* It was during this journey in disguise that the Prince of Condé and the Duke de la Rochefoucauld were entertained at the house of a gentleman, who, not knowing them, sought to amuse his guests at supper with an account of the amours of Madame de Longueville and La Rochefoucauld, to the astonishment of the prince and the mortification of the duke.

CHAP. XXX.

chal de l'Hôpital still remained governor for the king, and maintained a kind of neutrality betwixt the contending armies. He was supported by the majority of the parliament as well as by the Hôtel de Ville and its burgess guard, consisting of the better citizens, all of whom resented the calling in of the Spaniards by the Prince of Condé, and the ravages and expense of civil war which he had commenced. The Duke of Orleans, no longer lieutenant-general since the king's majority, had not the power or prestige which he formerly possessed. The Cardinal De Retz had grown lukewarm. The populace alone were prepared to favour Condé and welcome him as the antagonist of Mazarin. The parliament had sanctioned the royal declaration against the prince for having allied with Spain. And it now protested against his appearance till this sentence should be reversed. The Duke of Orleans, to whom they appealed, observed that Condé came possibly for this purpose, and the prince, entering Paris on the 14th of April, proceeded to parliament, and declared that he was most anxious for peace with Spain, and to make his submission to the king, provided Cardinal Mazarin was sent out of the country.

The parliament could not but listen to conditions of arrangement so congenial to its own sentiments; and the king and court having come to St. Germains, the parliament, the prince, and all concerned sent deputations thither to treat of peace. Mazarin received all blandly, and made few objections to the demands of any party; but as his object was to gain time and divide them, he threw obstacles in the way of a definitive settlement.* The Duke de Bouillon, for example, being one of the negotiators, the cardinal observed that it was not fair to grant everything to the Prince of Condé till he in turn had secured the Duchy of Albret,

* De Retz.

which was to recompense Bouillon for Sedan. There broke in also the intrigues of the women. Madame de Chatillon, who had captivated Condé, was the enemy of Madame de Longueville, his sister, and their mutual pique caused hesitation in the prince, and gave occasion for delay to the cardinal. The Duke of Orleans, too, became jealous of the many advantages offered to the prince, and De Retz fanned the feeling: so much so that the Duke made private overtures for a separate peace with the court.* Turenne at the same time took advantage of the prince being in Paris, and being engaged in negotiation, to attack his army and inflict upon him little short of a defeat, near Etampes† (May). Condé, however, hastened to take his revenge, and drove the royal army from St. Denis, at the head of the burgess guard of the Parisians. This parity betwixt the contending parties was broken in the month of June by the arrival of Duke Charles of Lorraine, at the head of a small army of 8,000 men. Nominally he was in the service of the King of Spain; really, he was in negotiation with Mazarin for the restoration of his duchy; and as the latter hesitated (it is but just to the cardinal to admit that he was ever unwilling to sacrifice the great territorial interests of the kingdom to his own), Duke Charles marched to Paris, where he appeared in friendship with the Parisians. Condé, of whom he demanded Stenay, would not pay for his support at that price, whilst Mazarin was lavish in promises to him. At the same time the cardinal ordered Turenne to raise the siege of Etampes, and come and offer battle to the Duke of Lorraine. Turenne gained Villeneuve St. George's by a rapid march, and signified to the duke that he must either withdraw or fight.‡

* La Rochefoucauld, Memoirs. Journal du Temps, De Retz. It was at this time that Charles the Second offered his intervention or mediation between the contending parties.

† James the Second's Memoirs.

‡ The bearer of the imperative

CHAP. XXX.

The Duke of Lorraine preferred the former alternative, to the great annoyance of his sister the Duchess of Orleans (June 16).

The negotiation between the prince and the court had in the meantime led to no result. Mazarin did not refuse to make his own withdrawal one of the terms of peace, but he insisted on the prince disarming before he withdrew. This condition was difficult to arrange, whilst the greatest distress began to prevail in Paris. The war had put an end to all trade, all earning, and wasted the environs, so that no provisions entered the city. There were 100,000 who lived on alms. The parliament and the municipality met to consider how best they could come to the relief of the famished. They were instantly surrounded by clamours raised by two opposite and contending parties, one shouting "Peace!" the other, "No Mazarin!" The first was organised in favour of the cardinal, by the two Fouquets, Abbé and Procureur, the other by the Duke of Beaufort, who subsequently summoned his rude followers to meet in the Palais Royal.* An insurrection was evidently brewing. The parliament and the municipalty took their precautions, however, in order that the solemn sitting to be held on the 26th in the Palais de Justice might pass without tumult. The prince had promised to submit to any conditions of peace, provided Mazarin was exiled. After the meeting, the only disputed point in which was who should carry the message to the court, the judges of the parliament were assailed as they came forth by the mob, and scandalously treated. All were kicked and beaten, some shot at and pierced by halberts. Whilst the populace thus took vengeance on the parliament, the burgess guard were but slow to its defence, being indignant at the delays thrown in the

message was the Duke of York, the future James the Second. His memoirs.

* Omer Talon, Régistre du Parlement et de l'Hôtel de Ville, Histoire du Tems, &c.

way of peace. In the end, indeed, they suppressed the tumult, but it was evident that the judicial body, which had so selfishly prevented the states-general from meeting, with the pretext of filling their place, had lost all authority as a political body, and from its own vacillation and disunion had fallen into contempt.

The Prince of Condé, despairing of peace by negotiation, returned to his army, and finding St. Cloud an unsafe position, determined to transfer his camp to the other side of Paris. In his march for this purpose he was anticipated by Turenne, who occupied the heights in that direction, and rendered it impossible for Condé to gain possession of the strong position he aimed at between the Seine and Marne at their point of junction. Condé was thus obliged to fling himself into the Faubourg St. Antoine, then outside Paris, from which it was separated by the gate of that name, and both commanded by the cannon of the Bastille. In this suburb Condé entered and barricaded himself, whilst the king and cardinal, mounting the heights now covered with the tombs of Père la Chaise, were able to observe the small force of the prince compared with that of the royal army. They ordered Turenne to attack. He insisted on the necessity of first getting up his artillery; but the king and Mazarin were impatient, and the Duke of Bouillon advised his brother to attack at once, as the court was full of suspicion against them and every one. Turenne accordingly gave orders for a triple assault down the three streets leading to the gate of St. Antoine and the Bastille. In the principal one, where Condé was with his immediate followers, he charged and drove back the royalists, but these succeeded in forcing the barrier of the Rue de Charonne, which was immediately under the eye of the king and cardinal, the infantry not only clearing the street, but driving the prince's soldiers from the windows and houses. The column, however, met with more resist-

CHAP. XXX.

ance as it advanced, and the cavalry behind, impatient, charged through their own infantry to overcome all opposition. It was in this impetuous manœuvre that the Marquis of St. Mesgrin, commanding the cavalry, was killed, as also the Marquis of Nantouillet, and Mancini, the cardinal's nephew. The attack was repelled. There was still more fighting in the streets between the Bastille and Charenton. The prince's troops having abandoned the principal barricade, it was seized and defended for a short time by his immediate friends, who were all either killed or wounded. The Duc de Nemours received thirteen wounds. The Duc de la Rochefoucauld was blinded for a time by a shot over the eye. More than a dozen of his noble friends fell at the barricades. Though kept at bay, the royalists were still preparing a fresh attack, which the prince's decimated troops could with difficulty sustain, when Mademoiselle, daughter of the Duke of Orleans, indignant at the indecision or cowardice of that prince, who remained in bed, extorted from him an order to the Hôtel de Ville. The same energy which enabled the young lady to prevail over her father was successfully exercised over the city authorities, and she proceeded with full powers to the gate of St. Antoine. In her passage she saw the wounded nobles of the engagement borne past. This added passion to the command which she gave to the burgess guard to open the gates. In this at last they acquiesced, and Condé with his army withdrew within the protecting walls of the capital. Mademoiselle then mounted to the ramparts of the Bastille, turned its cannon on the advancing royalists, and fired them with her own hand. Mazarin, at the sight, was struck with disappointment, and the young king with rage. There was nothing left for them but to withdraw their army.*

* Mémoires de Conrart; Relation de la Battaille du Faubourg St. Antoine. MS. Fontanieu, 492–3.

Although the remains of the army of Condé were thus saved, and had leisure to recruit their strength in the Faubourg St. Germains, where they were quartered, and although the gallantry of the prince begot much admiration, and conciliated many enemies, still his position was critical, with an army unable to take the field, and in a city of which the better classes were far from being in his interests. All, indeed, desired peace, and disliked Mazarin, but objected to accomplish even peace after Condé's fashion. The latter stood in imperative need of the support of the capital, but how was it to be secured? The chiefs of the parliament had been so outraged in the late tumults, that they came no longer to the palace, and it was useless to summon them. Recourse was therefore had to the citizens, already accustomed to meet in conjunction with the judges for the purposes of charity, of defence, and even of political discussion.*

The prince, however, could place little hope or confidence in the municipalty, over which the Maréchal de l'Hôpital presided as governor. He had been appointed by the crown. The sheriffs and the Prevôt des Marchands were of the same opinion. Condé's first object was to change them. The municipal body consisted of these officers, of the colonels of the burgess guard, and of the *quartiniers*, or chiefs of quarters, all nominated also by the crown. To them were added eight or twelve citizens from each quarter, chosen out of about sixty of the chief citizens, together with deputies from six corps of marchands. These constituted a municipal body, respectable, no doubt, but one which the people had no confidence in, or no influence in electing. They formed about 100 members, to which in a general assembly 100 more were added from the parliament, the authority, and the courts of law.†

* The provisions for feeding the people were so insufficient, that the prisoners were obliged to be liberated from the Conciergerie, there being no bread.

† Omer Talon. Régistres de l'Hôtel de Ville.

CHAP. XXX.

The prince, knowing he could expect no efficient aid for his army from such a body, determined to employ force to break it, so as to form a new municipalty, and appoint another governor, with city magistrates in his interest. When the assembly met, the two parties found themselves in presence (July 4, 1652). The few members of the municipalty or parliament that were in favour of the prince, were for declaring the Duke of Orleans lieutenant-general of the kingdom, and the Prince of Condé generalissimo of the troops. They shrank from making the proposal, however, knowing that it would not pass; whilst the majority equally feared to propose the unconditional return of the king to Paris, on account of the crowd outside. This, indeed, was most formidable, filling the entire Place de Grève with their numbers, and the air with their cries in favour of the prince. Many soldiers of Condé's army were amongst them. The prince himself and the Duke of Orleans staid away at first from the meeting, awaiting the result of the first motion. None being made, they both came towards six o'clock in the evening and addressed the assembly, but withdrew without making a proposal. The crowd was much irritated at the moment by the appearance of a trumpeter from the court with an order to the assembly of the Hôtel de Ville to break up. On his departure, Condé lingered for a moment on the high steps of the entrance, to tell the populace that "those assembled above would evidently do nothing for him, and that they were all Mazarins."

This was seized upon as the signal for tumult, and some three or four hundred muskets were instantly discharged against the windows of the great hall where the assembly was sitting. The mob then rushed to the gates, which had been closed, and set fire to them. The members of the assembly, alarmed, did all in their power to pacify the people. They signed an act of union in favour of the

prince, and flung it out of the window. In vain. The mob broke into the Hôtel de Ville, and general riot and pillage commenced, in which the members of the assembly were treated with extreme outrage. Several of the judges were killed, and many of the citizens shared the same fate. Those who tried to escape suffered more than those who hid or defended themselves in the building. The tumult lasted for six hours, without the burgess guard or any class of citizens interfering to succour the victims, a sufficient proof that the moderate royalists and chief citizens had very little sympathy or support from the mass of the population. At length the Duke of Beaufort came about midnight, and put an end to the scenes of murder and rapine.*

As the result of this reckless and inhuman massacre, the princes called a meeting of the municipalty, to which of course none but their followers flocked. Broussel was elected provost of the *Marchands*, and the Duke of Beaufort appointed governor of the capital, in lieu of the Maréchal de l'Hôpital, who had narrowly escaped with life. Condé was thus master of Paris, and even the moderate citizens, who shrank from him, in horror of the late acts of violence, were equally incensed with the queen for having imperilled them by her mad predilection for Mazarin. Although the chiefs of the parliament most attached to the court fled to it, the remainder pressed for the cardinal's exile, as the only condition of peace. After much hesitation the king and queen yielded, though with tears and reluctance, and empowered the keeper of the seals to state to the deputies of parliament that they consented to the withdrawal of Mazarin. The verbal promise did not, however, satisfy. The cardinal, it appeared, wished to go upon the honourable mission of concluding a peace with Spain, that mission precisely which Condé liked least

* Régistres de l'Hôtel de Ville; Mémoires De Conrart, De Montpensier, &c.

CHAP. XXX.

to entrust to him, being one in which he was himself much interested. He represented the court as insincere, and induced those councillors of the parliament, who remained, to declare the Duke of Orleans lieutenant-general, the prince himself generalissimo, and to proceed to levy 800,000 livres to enable him to raise an army. Circulars were at the same time to be sent to the chief towns of France for their adhesion. This resolution alarmed the court. It removed from St. Denis to Pontoise, and issued an order that the entire parliament should transfer its sitting to the latter town (August 5). The parliament, on learning the decree, voted that it would take it into consideration as soon as Cardinal Mazarin was out of France. The latter then saw the necessity of his complying, at least for a time, with so universal a desire. He allowed a request of the same nature to be drawn up and made by the eleven chief judges of parliament assembled at Pontoise, in answer to which the king gave a solemn assent to his minister's withdrawal (August 12).

In a week after, Mazarin actually took his departure. The effect was instantaneous. The parliament showed at once its desire to receive the king and submit to him. The citizens were in similar sentiments. And Condé placed his sole hopes in the Spaniards and the Duke of Lorraine. This prince had been successful during the summer, and indeed had met with small resistance. Gravelines had surrendered, and they sat down before Dunkirk. Turenne kept with his small army at Compiègne, to protect the court both from Condé and the Spaniards. At this critical moment the Duke of Lorraine was induced to make another hasty march upon Paris, no doubt with the view of intimidating the king and queen, and compelling them to grant that restitution of his domains which the cardinal so pertinaciously withheld. The duke joined the Prince of Condé in the old position which he had occupied on the Seine east of

Paris. But he had scarcely pitched his tents there, when those of Turenne were seen opposite to him, occupying his former impregnable position of defence. Turenne's force was much inferior to that of Condé and Lorraine united. But they could not compel him either to remove or to fight, and Condé was unable to turn his military superiority to the accomplishment of a peace advantageous to himself.

The prince, indeed, and his family had not gained by getting rid of Mazarin. His counsel had always been for yielding, whereas the queen and the young king, left to themselves, were obstinate. They would give no security* and make no further concessions, whilst the Parisians, not merely the upper class, but the people themselves, began to be weary of the dangers and privations of war. They were alarmed, too, by the tidings that the Spaniards had taken Dunkirk. The princes had quarrelled among themselves. The Count de Rieux went so far as to strike Condé. The Duke of Beaufort killed the relative of the Duke of Nevers in a duel. The Duke of Orleans was advised by the Cardinal de Retz to make his peace apart. And the latter personage put himself at the head of a deputation of the clergy, which were to ask the king to re-enter the capital, and speak of no conditions. The parliament and the citizens met, and resolved on making each the same petition. There was nothing left but for Condé to quit Paris with the Duke of Lorraine, and rely no longer upon sedition, but upon Spain and his own resources, to carry on the war. The Duke of Orleans could entertain no such thought. To him there was nothing left but submission, for the court refused an amnesty; the duke, therefore, retired to Blois, and the young Louis, with his mother, was received

* Condé wrote to Lenet, 22nd of August: "Monsieur and myself offer to lay down our arms if the court will abstain from hostility, and send its troops to the frontier."

CHAP. XXX.

with acclamations as he entered Paris, an absolute king, on the 21st of October, 1652.

Thus ended the Fronde, the last attempt made by the upper and civic classes of French society to protect themselves from the ignorant rapacity and tyranny of the crown. The sentiment which produced it was not, indeed, either sufficiently wide-sprung or profound, and proceeded more from the impatience of professional men than from any of those deep causes of discontent which stir up society from its foundations. The Fronde was a mutiny of the nobles led by princes, and of the middle classes led by their judicial magistrates against a government which knew not the science of its own calling, and which strove to cover and supply the defects of its ignorance by despotism. It is impossible to conceive aught more absurd, more unskilled, or more provoking than the financial administration under Richelieu and Mazarin. The modes of dispensing justice, of gathering political wisdom, and distributing political power, were equally monstrous. All felt it, and all pronounced it to be the more intolerable, when the minister called in to apply such principles was a foreigner, knowing neither the French tongue nor French customs; an adept, perhaps, at diplomatic finesse and court suppleness, but adding such meanness of character to such incapacity of administration as to make government equally ridiculous and odious.

Yet all these feelings of repulsion provoked by Mazarin touched no deep or popular fibre. The citizens felt the material oppression, prince and noble the arrogance of the upstart, the legists the contempt and ignorance of the laws, and all joined in shouting, *Down with Mazarin!* But the hue and cry was that of a hunt after a noxious animal, exciting acclamation rather of contempt than of serious anger, of ridicule more than of political conviction. Thus a vein of the comic came to blend with and spoil everything

that was serious ; and a lightness of purpose, of principle, and of conduct came to distinguish the opposition to the government, but too characteristically expressed in the name which it bore of the Fronde.*

At the very same period the English nation and the English mind were stirred in no very dissimilar way by the despotic pretensions and financial incapacities of the crown and its ministers, who ignored, as completely as the French, whatever traditions and semblance of liberty survived in the country. But amidst this political and material oppression there was that deeper and more universal feeling of religious wants and convictions, identified with freedom, and much more intolerant of tyranny, than either the citizen's purse or the noble's pride. The French had fought their religious battle in the previous century, and the middle class, which had maintained Protestantism, was beaten. It was too late for the same class to stand up for civil and political freedom, after it had lost the cause of religious liberty. Indeed the citizens knew not what to struggle for, and when discord did arise, amidst the general resistance, the civic class was so maltreated in the Fronde by the nobles on one side, and the mob on the other, that it at last rallied to the government at all risks, even with Mazarin at its head. The civic classes of France, subdued by the League and betrayed by Henry the Fourth, gave in their resignation altogether, on the failure of the Fronde; and this so completely, that they came to count for little, even in the great explosion of a century and a half later.

Although the Fronde disappeared from that scene, where it was dangerous, and which it occupied to the exclusion of royalty itself—the capital—its remains

* It was supposed to be so called from the favourite game of the *gamins de Paris*, at the commencement of the disturbances, who were wont to fight each other with slings on the fortifications and in the *fosses* of the capital.

CHAP. XXX.

still survived in the provinces, especially in Bordeaux, and its results were felt in the continuance of the war which they prolonged, and in the rebellion and disaffection of those princes and nobles whom Mazarin and the court under his influence provoked.

As the king entered Paris, his secretary sent missives to the several members of both the parliaments of Paris and Pontoise, not distasteful to him, to assemble. Eleven of the judges, Broussel amongst them, were not summoned. The rest met in the old picture gallery of the Louvre, the king having his guards all around the palace. He informed them that he cancelled all their late acts, forgiving them their anarchy, with the exception of the eleven not summoned. He forbade them henceforth to meddle with the affairs of state, or express any opinion respecting government or the state. He at the same time forbade any legal officer of the crown to receive pensions from princes, or even to frequent their society. Submissive as was the parliament, its members deprecated so harsh a sentence, such a total annulment as a political body. But the king was determined, and the chancellor bade them register the decree, which confined them to their judicial functions. The parliament submitted.

The noble leaders of the Fronde were as unceremoniously dealt with. The Dukes of Beaufort, La Rochefoucauld, and Rohan were banished from Paris. The Cardinal de Retz had certainly contributed to the submission of the Parisians, and even of the Duke of Orleans, who had withdrawn to Blois. The queen was willing to be reconciled to him; but De Retz, instead of grasping at her offers while his arch-foe was away, delayed and higgled for rewards and advantages to his friends. This gave time for the advice of Mazarin to prevail, who dreaded De Retz as an able and eminent rival for ministerial supremacy. De Retz, as usual, began to lean for support on those who still continued resistance,

and he was at length (in December) arrested and sent to an ill-furnished room, without a fire, in the castle of Vincennes, where he passed fifteen months, partly engaged, as soon as he was allowed ink and paper, in writing his incomparable memoirs. The court would have allowed him to go ambassador to Rome, which he declined. But Mazarin would not let him loose till he resigned the archbishopric of Paris. De Retz did so, and made use of his liberty to escape from France. At Rome and elsewhere he remained long a thorn in the side of Mazarin, to whom he altogether indisposed the papal court. But his dissolute and incoherent life marred his prospects in exile as it had done at home, and he at last ceased to make himself respected as a man, much less as a cardinal.

Condé and his party alone held out, himself with the Spanish armies, his brother and sister at Bordeaux. That city had followed in the wake of Paris, giving birth to a Fronde against the financial incapacity and tyranny of Mazarin. As in Paris, the chief judges of the parliament and the wealthy citizens, the great Fronde, as they were called, were for restricting their efforts to a moderate and constitutional opposition, that stopped short of treason, whilst the population, or little Fronde, were for going all lengths. They came to hold out-door meetings before a large elm tree which grew in the vicinity of the Fort du Ha, and formed a republic under the name of the *Ormée*, their popular edicts being dated thence.

The removal of Condé's presence from Bordeaux was the signal for anarchy to prevail. He had managed to preserve the two parties from open strife. He obtained succours in troops or money, as well as promises from Spain, and opened the trade with England, admitting its woollens, which the Paris parliament had stupidly proscribed, for Bordeaux wines. But after his departure, the Prince of Conti and his sister the Duchess of Longue-

CHAP. XXX.

ville governed. His affection for her, tinctured with all the caprice of a lover, was not satisfied with her other preference; and whilst the duchess fraternised, as one might say, with the little Fronde, Conti intrigued with the great. The Ormée had, however, finally expelled the chiefs of the aristocratic faction from Bordeaux, hoisted the red flag, frankly accepted the aid of the Spaniards, and rased the Fort du Ha. The triumph of the court over the popular faction in Paris came as a threatening blow to the Ormée. It encouraged their more aristocratic rivals of the parliament and city to try and effect a reconciliation. But the plot was discovered and its machinators driven out. It was then that the Bordelais applied to Cromwell, making use of a plea, most powerful with him, that of resuscitating the Huguenot party in the south of France. The Protector hesitated. He was but newly installed in his high office, and his attention turned more to the coast and territories of the Low Countries. Perhaps he was displeased that Condé had already received a large body of Irish volunteers. Whilst he hesitated to accept or save the fort offered to him in the Gironde, the royal armies and the royal authorities advanced southwards and gained ground daily. The country north of the Gironde soon submitted; and in July, Bordeaux itself was obliged to capitulate. The Ormée was put down, and the first care of Louis the Fourteenth was to rebuild the forts Du Ha and Château Trompette.*

Great and growing as was the authority of the king, it is not to be wondered at that Condé, who had no security, and who soon learned what that security would have become by the arrest and imprisonment of the Cardinal de Retz, repaired to the Spanish camp. The Count de Fuensaldagna had promised him the un-

* Memoirs of Lenet, of Gourville, of Madame de Nemours, La Rochefoucauld, &c.

controlled command, a promise far from being fulfilled. Condé, however, had still some 30,000 men, whilst at the close of 1652, and all through 1653, Turenne had not more than 7,000 infantry, from which he could not detach a man to garrison a single town. His tactics were to keep within a few miles of his enemy, always well entrenched and on his own ground. The only way of dealing with such an adversary was to seize a sudden opportunity, fall upon and defeat him. But this the Spanish commander never allowed Condé to do, always deprecating or asking and demanding time to consider it. Thus was Turenne enabled to baffle all the prince's efforts, until the reduction of Bordeaux allowed the reinforcement of the royal army of the north, and its greater equality with that of the troops opposed to it. The campaign of 1654 was marked by the siege of Arras, the Spaniards hoping under Condé's direction to recover the capital of Artois, one of the last conquests of Richelieu. Condé was not inclined to undertake the siege at all, and even after it commenced was not for persisting in it. The prince was left without money or ammunition, and even his orders were not punctually obeyed. The consequence was that Turenne, with a very inferior army, succeeded in forcing his entrenchments, putting to flight the Italian legion of Spain, and leaving it in the power of the prince merely to make an orderly retreat. His artillery, he was compelled to abandon. Condé was so disgusted with his want of troops and money that he sent an agent to Rome with the view of negotiating through the pope his return to France. Mazarin, however, in his later years, became as reluctant to come to terms with his personal enemy as in the early part of his career he had shown himself pliant to do so. Condé was obliged to recur to arms; but both sides were too much exhausted to strike either of them a decided blow. The finances of France presented a perfect chaos of dilapidation and disorder,

CHAP. XXX.

Mazarin being more intent upon filling his private stores than in meeting the exigencies of the state. Thus the soldiers of the royal army, instead of being collected in winter quarters, were scattered amongst the farm-houses to live upon the peasant. That Condé and his allies were not able to take advantage of such military disorganisation only proves that the Spanish administration was no better than the French. In 1656 Condé was enabled to retaliate upon Turenne the latter's feat of two years previous. The royal army, under Turenne, laid siege to Valenciennes, July 1656. How insufficient a war minister was Cardinal Mazarin may be estimated from the circumstance of the Marshals Harcourt and Hocquincourt having treated with the enemy, and sought to wring from the cardinal those advantages and rewards which his sense of justice in general would not give them. Harcourt, having got possession of Brisach, maintained himself there in an independent style, and treated with Austria until Mazarin paid the price of his abandoning his position. Marshal Hocquincourt was induced later to imitate him. Having military possession of Ham and Peronne, he treated with the Spaniards, and in the same way endeavoured to force concessions from the court, as those fortresses immediately south of the capital could easily be held by the Spaniards. Mazarin was obliged, in this instance also, to accede to the marshal's terms, he in the end proving false, and deserting to the Spaniards. It was, in fact, one chief cause of the feebleness of the French efforts that the noblesse sympathised far more with Condé than with Mazarin, and never put forth that zeal and courage which a king with a native minister could and ought to have commanded. At Valenciennes Marshal de la Ferté shared the command with Turenne, and scorned to adopt the precautions recommended by the latter. When the prince and the Spaniards attacked, they penetrated with as much ease

within the intrenchments of the besiegers of Valenciennes as Turenne had done within those of Condé before Arras. Hocquincourt's division was destroyed, though the cardinal's especial regiment and gendarmes made part of it; and the result of the two sieges seems to establish, that neither France nor Spain, though Turenne and Condé commanded for them, could make any sensible impression, or achieve any important conquest, one over the other.

The war, so puny in its efforts, was indeed unworthy of the two great monarchies. It had lingered so long that it seemed to their respective governments almost the normal state of things. The misery and distress which it produced* troubled little the sumptuous Mazarin. Nor was he more disturbed by the weight of taxes, which he extended and augmented without scruple, without justice, or even sagacity, upon every class from which money could be wrung. The gabelle, or tax on salt, was raised beyond all price. The *octrois*, or duties levied at gates of towns, were doubled, the state taking the original product and the town being obliged to raise as much more. Goods could no longer be transported by water, so exorbitant was the duty levied. The tailles, estimated at 50,000,000 of livres, and the fermes at 35,000,000, were anticipated and engaged. In 1656 Fouquet borrowed 800,000 livres, for which he gave 400,000 interest or rentes. Two millions of rentes were issued in 1657, similar sums in the ensuing two years. Of the 60,000,000 ordinary expenditure, Mazarin took 23,000,000 to himself, besides generalities and pickings innumerable. His agents gathered up old debts, which the treasury would take no account of, but which, pre-

* See the famine-stricken state of both peasantry and soldiers, as described by La Porte in his memoirs at the time of the siege of Etampes, and of the court going to St. Germain.

† 34 sols the minot were added in 1653.

CHAP. XXX.

sented by Mazarin, were instantly paid. The sale of office went on as glibly as ever, and forty-six posts of king's secretary were disposed of in 1654. Accounts there were none; the money was drawn from the treasury by *acquits au comptant*, without specifying how or where the money went. Statements of French revenue or expenditure became impossible until Colbert introduced some order into them. From the fall of Sully in 1610 to his formal appointment in 1661, there elapsed half a century of utter anarchy in French finance. Yet the proposal of a bold man is worth reading. He recommended the doing away of taille, aides, and gabelle; the preservation of merely the douane and the customs, to which he would have added the levy of a sou a day upon all the *aisés;* that is, people able to pay it, and which he estimated at 6,000,000. It required some more acknowledged authority than that which existed in 1649 to realise such a project.*

If the revenue to be drawn from France was thus scant, the aid to be derived from allies was equally dried up. The Dutch were too jealous of Mazarin's schemes to come in aid of them. Cromwell, who had rendered England once more a power, eyed with equal mistrust the two Catholic courts. Whilst still engaged in his struggle with the Stuarts, he had turned his view to procuring a port on the opposite continent, no doubt to guard against their enterprises. Disappointed in bribing the governor of Dunkirk, or in purchasing it from the French court, he aided the Spaniards to capture it in 1651, the British fleet under Blake defeating a French one under the Duc de Vendôme, which came with succours. Recollecting this, the Spanish envoy looked to secure the friendship and alliance of the new Protector. But Cromwell wanted tolerance for Pro-

* Forbonnais, Recherches. Colbert's Mémoire. Joubleau's Etudes sur Colbert.

testantism in Spain, and freedom of navigation for English traders to the Spanish West Indies.* Cromwell's policy was to make peace with the Protestant Dutch, and get afterwards what he could out of French and Spanish rivalry. He listened to their biddings, mistrusted the power of Spain to procure him Calais, and closed with Mazarin, who promised, and who finally gave, Dunkirk, with a favourable commercial treaty in 1655.†

The cardinal was not very sincere, as is evident from his despatch of Lionne as an envoy to Madrid, in the ensuing year, to propose terms of accommodation. As if incidentally, Lionne proposed the marriage of the young king Louis with the infanta. The marriage had been mooted long before. Rumours of it at Munster, 1646, had alarmed the Dutch, and added to their other inducements to make a separate peace. But at that time Philip the Fourth had a son, and the possession of the infanta did not imply more than amity between the families and alliance between the countries. But when in 1656 the French envoy made his proposals for the hand of the infanta, the Spanish minister, Don Louis de Haro, was so alarmed at it as to break off the negotiation.‡

Mazarin was indeed a minister of grandiose projects. Very little after his proposal to marry the heir and heiress of the French and Spanish monarchies, he sent the same envoy, Lionne, with Maréchal de Grammont, to Germany, with no less an errand than procuring the imperial crown for Louis the Fourteenth. Ferdinand the Third had succeeded in 1653 in obtaining the election of his eldest son to be king of the Romans.

* Somers' Tracts, vol. vi. French affairs in Protector's time.

† See Thurlow Papers. Conway, in one of his letters, gives the following picture of the French court: "The King of France is light-haired, the Duke of Anjou black. The king silent and few of words; the duke talkative and merry. The king loves himself, Anjou women."

‡ Mignet, Negotiations.

CHAP. XXX.

The young prince died the following year. His next brother, Leopold, was an ecclesiastic, and the emperor had not accomplished the appointing of his successor when he died in 1657.

A diet, of course, was summoned for the imperial election, and it was on this occasion that Lionne and Grammont were sent upon the old quest of Francis the First. They found it at once to be an idle dream of the cardinal. The Germans, as well as Spaniards, would not hear of the proposal to transfer the empire to a French prince, which the Italian politicians deemed quite feasible. The French then sought to bring forwards the Elector of Bavaria as a competitor to the throne of Austria. That prince was unequal to the contest; and Leopold was fully elected in July 1658. Mazarin, however, did not allow the policy of Richelieu to be annulled in Germany, and whilst the House of Austria still held the imperial throne, and remained supreme over the south of Germany, the French resuscitated the old alliance which Richelieu and Sweden had upheld, and which united the north against the ambitious intentions of Austria. The league of the Rhine was concluded between France, Sweden, the three ecclesiastical electors, the Palatine, the Duke of Bavaria, and the Landgrave of Hesse. The chief of its stipulations was the maintenance of an army of 10,000 men, to oppose, if necessary, any encroachment or dictation of the emperor.

Whilst Mazarin thus raised up antagonists to the house of Austria in Germany, the emperor in turn made every effort to oppose the project of the French court in Spain. He thought the infanta due to himself rather than to Louis the Fourteenth, and claimed her as his future bride. But Mazarin did not despair. The birth of a prince at Madrid and the subsequent pregnancy of the queen, rendered the infanta no longer heiress of the Spanish monarchy. But still casuists

discovered that the infanta, born of an elder marriage than her brother, retained the best claim to a large portion of the Low Countries, especially to Brabant and the provinces south and east of it.

The Spanish court was, however, slow to entertain, slower to close with any propositions. And Mazarin, at once to hasten its decision and to learn whether the war was to be vigorously prosecuted or peace concluded with Spain, resolved to proceed with the negotiation for the marriage of the king with the Princess of Savoy. The queen would have preferred the daughter of Charles the First of England. But Mazarin hoped that the news of the Savoy marriage would bring the court of Spain to offer the infanta. Nor was he mistaken. The court went in the autumn of 1656 to Lyons, and a solemn meeting took place with that of Savoy, in which Louis professed himself not displeased with the beauty of the princess.

Philip the Fourth, however, no sooner heard of it, than he declared that it must not be, and that the best chance of an amicable arrangement with France must not be lost. He accordingly despatched Pimentel with an offer of the hand of the infanta. This obscure envoy reached Lyons, and first opened his mission to Colbert, whom he knew, and whom Madame de Motteville styles a domestic of the cardinal. Mazarin received the information with joy, and it was timely, for, notwithstanding the strong repugnance which Queen Anne showed to the Savoy marriage, the king showed himself anxious for it. One evening, the cardinal appeared all radiant, announcing to the queen "good news." "What?" exclaimed the queen. "Peace?" "Better, madam," said the minister; "I bring you not only peace, but the infanta!"* (Nov. 1658.)

It was not till the middle of 1659 that the preliminaries of peace were adjusted between France and

* Madame de Motteville.

CHAP. XXX.

Spain. In the same intimate union of the monarchs, Mazarin relaxed of that extravagance which prompted him to pretend to Catalonia and to support Portugal. The only danger to the conclusion of the treaty being the amorous nature of the young Louis, who, confined to the society of the cardinal's nieces, had become enamoured of one after the other. Olympe was his first flame, but she soon became Countess of Soissons. Her sister Marie then captivated the young king, and went so far as to act the part of injured rival when at Lyons the Savoy match was under consideration.

The cardinal is accused by his enemies of having at one time favoured the marriage of the king with Marie, but the queen having declared that she would raise the country against such a monstrous match, Mazarin desisted. At all events, the cardinal's letter remains, in which he employs every dissuasion with the young king; and at last he sent his niece off to Bourges, whilst the court was preparing to go to the Pyrenees. It was on this occasion that Marie Mancini is said to have addressed Louis in the famous allocution: "You are king, you weep, yet I depart."

The Cardinal Mazarin, and Don Luis de Haro, minister of Spain, met in the Isle of Pheasants, surrounded by the Bidassoa in 1659. Mazarin's letters remain to give an authentic account of what passed between them.* From them we learn that the only difficulty of the negotiation, as well as the brunt of Don Luis' efforts, was the restoration of Condé. Mazarin was contented to reinstate the prince in the possession of his rank and private fortune. More was at first resolutely refused, but at last, in exchange for Avesnes, which Spain yielded, Condé was restored to the government of Burgundy, and his son to be Grand Master of the Household.

In November 1659 the treaty of the Pyrenees was

* In a printed edition.

definitively signed. France by its arrangement acquired the province of Artois with the exception of St. Omers and Aire. It also kept Gravelines, Landrecies, Avesnes, Philippeville and Marienbourg, Thionville and Montmédi, the present frontier of France indeed with the exception of Lille and French Flanders. In the south France gave up all it held beyond the Pyrenees, Spain in turn definitively ceding Roussillon. The French king abandoned the support of Portugal, and consented to restore the Duke of Lorraine to his duchy on condition that all its fortresses should be demolished, and free passage given to French troops going to or coming from Alsace. Such was the treaty of the Pyrenees, which, in conjunction with the preceding one of Westphalia, secured to the French monarchy that extended frontier of which Richelieu conceived the plan, and which Mazarin certainly completed.

The crowning act of the treaty, the marriage of the king with the infanta, was accomplished on the 9th of June 1660, she bringing a dowry of half a million of dollars; the infanta at the same time renouncing any right, that might ever accrue to her, of succession either to the throne of Spain, or to any of its possessions, Flanders and Burgundy especially. Returning with such results of a long war, not only the king with his bride, the court, even Mazarin himself, were received in Paris with every demonstration of affection and respect. There was the less objection to paying this tardy homage to Mazarin from his sinking health, which too plainly told that he would not long remain to annoy enemies or reward friends. It was, indeed, part of his good fortune to be withdrawn from the scene in time. In 1660 he was in the height of his glory, completely crushing all enmity by his success, yet more powerless and friendless personally than ever he had been. He had become alienated from Anne of Austria, and by all accounts did his utmost to diminish her influence with her

CHAP. XXX.

son—facts that agree little with the assertion that the cardinal was her husband. The king too, no doubt, bore his dictatorial authority with some impatience, and the Prince, whose searching inquiries were already directed to the disordered state of the finances, could not but perceive that the great source of that evil was the cardinal. Mazarin, indeed, must have observed this. One of his acts in his declining days was to make offer of the whole of his immense property to the king. The monarch generously refused to accept it, though in the few days that elapsed between the offer and its answer, the breast of the avaricious old man was torn with anguish.

On the 4th of March Mazarin expired. His character has been sufficiently delineated during the narrative of the events of his government. His death was welcomed by the public and the court as a deliverance, not only from tyranny but incapacity, the latter strongly marking his financial and domestic administration. The same cannot be said of the royal personages with whom he lived, and for whom he ruled. If tears betoken feeling, both the queen-mother and the king, notwithstanding all that has been recorded of their dislike of the cardinal, showed the commiseration and affection of relatives to the dying Mazarin. He had shown a due sense of the necessity of instructing the young monarch in the leading features of foreign policy, and had spent many hours in the task. But he could not feel the same anxiety that Richelieu had felt about the completion of his own policy; for in truth it was completed. Whilst Richelieu died saving and struggling for the grandeur of France, Mazarin's thoughts were absorbed in the securing and disposal of his own fortune, not only of his money and his jewels, but even of offices of state. Never was there so prominent a figure of avarice as the cardinal presented even on his death-bed; and yet it was much to be doubted if avarice was

originally his nature. The letters of Colbert depict him unmistakably as prodigal and reckless in money matters, grasping indeed, but still more lavish. But the distress, even pecuniary, to which he was reduced in his exile, and his sad experience, that gold was the truest friend in adverse circumstances, so swelled his greed and diminished his generosity, that the very name of Mazarin has become expressive of rapacity and parsimony. He was not without redeeming qualities. No one could have been more true to the country of his adoption, or more able in the pursuit of its great objects. As a foreign politician he stands by the side of Richelieu, and is not thrown into the shade by that colossal statesman. Their domestic administrations were alike detestable. But to render a country great and to make it happy are aims seldom compatible. The resemblance of the two great ministers might be followed even further. Their care and patronage of letters and the arts were equal. In this respect, Mazarin's impulse was the purest, for whilst Richelieu's patronage was inspired by vain-glory, Mazarin's was the innate love of the Italian for antiquity and art.

Notwithstanding such merits, France felt relieved at being delivered from rulers not formed to its nature and its spirit. For though it had no longer the means of even protesting, the country felt that under the successive governments of two powerful priests, it had been reduced, notwithstanding its greatness, to the rank of a small Italian principality, where all that was virile was under the yoke of the mean, the crafty, and the sacerdotal.

"Ci gît l'Eminence Deuxième," ran the popular epitaph; "Dieu nous garde de la Troisième."

CHAP. XXXI.

LOUIS THE FOURTEENTH, FROM MAZARIN'S DEATH TO THE PEACE OF NIMEGUEN.

1661—1679.

CHAP. XXXI.

ALTHOUGH tyranny is exploded as a form of government, from the rareness of the wielder being endowed with faculties equal to the task, absolute power is still invoked and approved by many as the best of regimens, if it be marked by superior character and intelligence. It is forgotten how much undue and uncontrolled authority deteriorates both, how effectually despotism closes up all the apertures by which public talent makes its way to the surface, and how the most heroic of youthful sovereigns may dwindle from mere isolation and self-indulgence into the vain, the unfortunate, and the decrepid. There could not be a more striking example than Louis the Fourteenth and his reign. No youth could have been more amply endowed with the attributes which distinguish royalty. Of majestic person, handsome, though commanding features, of high intellect and capacity, falling short of genius, no doubt, but for that very reason better adapted to embrace the details of administration, as well as to appreciate and choose fitting instruments and functionaries, Louis had almost from boyhood turned his mind to political events, and on assuming power "had the advantages of youth and experience together."* He was but seventeen, when hearing at Vincennes of the resist-

* Bolingbroke.

ance of Parliament to his edicts, he rode to the Palace of Justice, entered its hall in riding boots, whip in hand, according to some, and signified to the judges that he was their master and must be obeyed.* He admired Mazarin's address, whilst alive to his defects. He early adopted that minister's habits of dissimulation, and would have put an end to his financial rapine and disorder, had he not feared by declaring against the cardinal to resuscitate the turbulence of the Fronde.† Mazarin was accustomed to keep note-books and record in them the intrigues of the day. Louis the Fourteenth kept also a similar *carnet* in his pocket, but the little book contained merely the amount of the month's revenue and of the expenditure which he sanctioned.‡ To such serious and reflecting habits Louis added those which commanded the admiration of his people. He was brave, gallant, sumptuous, and splendid, a lover of poetry, of letters, and the fine arts.

The faults which counterbalanced these virtues and high qualities sprung more from his position and education than from original character. Taught that he was the uncontrolled master of his subjects§, of their lives, will, creed, and fortunes, he could scarcely avoid deifying self, concentrating all efforts, and referring all results, to his person. He has himself avowed that his sole motive of action was to render his name illustrious.‖ The happiness of his subjects, the grandeur and welfare of the state, were viewed by him not for the benefit conferred on the many, but for the glory they reflected on himself. Whilst his policy came thus to have no higher aim than vain glory, his demi-god elevation suggested that he was above the common rules of

* Mémoires de Montglat.

† King's instructions to the dauphin in the first volume of his works.

‡ The *carnets* of Louis the Fourteenth are preserved in the Bibliothèque Impériale.

§ The copies which Louis wrote when a boy have been preserved *Les rois font tout ce qu'ils veulent*, is a specimen of what was set before him.

‖ Instructions au Dauphin.

CHAP. XXXI.

morality or religion. This flung him into a life of sensuality, for which in after days he sought to atone by intolerance and persecution. The possession of despotic power and its natural results thus turned the virtues of Louis into vice, and his wisdom into folly. The somewhat refined attachment, which he at first showed to Mademoiselle de la Vallière, became coarse indulgence with her successors. His love of economy and order were turned to wilful and wild extravagance. Those able ministers and generals whom he found formed to his hand, the Colberts, the Turennes, and the Condés, could not be replaced by others at all comparable to them. And as the wealth and power of the kingdom became frittered away by the hands of Louis, its political talent at least escaped the obscured and bigoted intelligence of the sovereign, who knew no world beyond his court, and soon saw none outside his closet.

It must have been owing to this same deification of the royal person that Louis had neither friendship nor intimacy with his own sex. Henry the Fourth and Francis the First lived with their noblesse as their comrades and with their intimate councillors as friends. Louis was lifted far above such solace or support, and instead of the generous sympathy, which his great predecessors felt for their fellowmen, the king came to feel gratification merely in their flattery and submission. He received all homage as a duty, and resented difference or opposition as an indignity and a treason. Nor was this moroseness and ill-nature the growth of years. Almost the first act of his reign displayed a harsh vindictiveness which called to mind Louis the Thirteenth and Richelieu rather than the humane laxity of Mazarin.

This minister had left Europe in a state of profound peace. Spain was exhausted, England still embarrassed with its recent wars and revolution, the emperor never

less master of his empire and never more menaced by the Turks. France was the first country to recover financial and thereby military strength; and this enabled the young king to accomplish certain small, yet not unimportant, aims, without provoking war. In despite of marriages and treaties, wrote Louis in 1671, Spain and France will ever be enemies, for the advantage of one must be the *detriment* of the other. Therefore, observed he, with a logic truly royal, it is vain to expect that treaties should be punctually observed. The French king therefore supported Portugal against its powerful neighbour, and contrived to get up a marriage of one of its princesses with Charles the Second in order to make England anti-Spanish. The relations with England had also been drawn closer by the marriage of the king's brother with Charles' sister, Henrietta. Louis at the same time induced the prodigal and needy Charles to sell him Dunkirk, and the Duke of Lorraine for mercenary reasons of the same kind to cede that duchy after his death to the court of France. To these more solid gains were added some vainglorious triumphs, which, whilst procuring admiration for him amongst the mob of his subjects, created in European courts universal fear of his arrogance and ambition. The Spanish ambassador having demanded precedence over the French envoy in London, Louis could not be pacified without the fullest reparation, and a formal admission of the superiority of the French over the Spanish crown. Louis' adulatory writers claimed for him the same advantage over the emperor which he only awaited an opportunity to enforce. The same at Rome. His envoy went thither with the mission of quarrelling with the Papal court and outraging it. This order the Duke de Créquy executed with the rudeness of a soldier. Quarrels ensued, and even combats between the Pope's Corsican guards and the suite of the ambassador, in one of which the lady

CHAP. XXXI.

of the latter was maltreated and one of her domestics killed. Louis threatened nothing less than war, and even made preparations for a campaign* (1663). The Pope (Chigi), unsupported by Austria, felt it necessary to make the humblest submission, and send his nephew to Paris to ask pardon.

A thirst of the youthful monarch to signalise his reign by war impelled him, as much as pride, to these overbearing acts. As all potentates bowed before him in Europe, he took the Turk for a foe. In 1664 the French king, pressed by the emperor, agreed to send 6000 men to his aid, adroitly insisting that it was as a member of the alliance of the Rhine that he furnished the succour. The Count of Coligny led the little army, which did good service, mainly contributing to drive back and defeat the Turks after they had crossed the Danube near Raab, and were in the full tide of triumphing over the German soldiers.† The glory of St. Gothard was, about the same time (Aug. 1664), somewhat obscured by the utter failure of the Duke of Beaufort to effect a landing on the Algerine coast.

But the events of the first five years of Louis' reign, most important in the eyes of chroniclers and memoir writers, were the personal predilections which he displayed either towards the young ladies of the court or amongst the ministers who conducted public affairs. The young queen, of devout and retiring habits, did not long fix the affections of the volatile monarch, although she gave birth to a dauphin in November, 1661. After some coquetting with Mdlle. de la Mothe, from whom he was repelled by the severity of the lady having charge of Queen Anne's maids of honour, he then found a joyous companion in the Duchess

* Documents in the Dépôt de la Guerre, quoted by Camille Rousset, in his Histoire de Louvois.

† Relation de le Victoire de St. Gothard. Mémoires de Coligny. Camille Rousset.

Henrietta, wife of his brother, and sister of Charles the Second. Innocent as was their intimacy, it gave rise to scandal, and Louis turned his attention to one of Henrietta's suite, Mademoiselle de la Vallière. This fair and blue-eyed beauty, another Gabrielle, remained mistress of the king's affections for many years. As, however, she was neither a woman of capacity nor a politician, we must refer to the copious memoirs of the day, to those of Madame Henrietta, Madame de Motteville, or the more scandalous work of Bussy, those readers who may be curious in such matters. The world which cried loudly against the subsequent amours of Louis, has been indulgent to his connection with La Vallière. The state of the age should be considered in all such judgments, and in Louis' time the rule seems to have been for every man to pay his addresses to every woman, the few instances of virtue which resisted, such as that of Madame de Sevigné, being evidently exceptions. Be it enough to indicate without stirring up such a heap.

This dissoluteness of morals and absence of high principle and purpose, was combated by the most strenuous efforts of genius. Pascal brought all the acuteness of logic, Bourdaloue all the warmth of eloquence to expose the fallacy of Montaigne's epicureanism. Yet the lessons of the preacher were scarcely less pernicious to the monarch, whose royal favour and royal qualities he flattered, passing over with courtly lenience, at least for a long time, every flagrant sin against morality, whilst asserting that a monarch's first Christian duty was to propagate what he called faith, and extirpate what he considered heresy. Even upon society, or rather upon that court society, which they alone addressed, the eloquence of divines went far more to convert a few eminent voluptuaries to monastic asceticism, than to reform society, or render man a worthy and religious member of it. And their aim, as, indeed, has been that of Catholicism

CHAP. XXXI.

always, was rather to resuscitate an impossible past, than fashion or introduce that state of moral and religious feeling which befitted the age.

Social pleasures were indeed the chief pursuits, and literature did far more to elevate and purify them than religion. There is no epoch so thickly studded by the appearance of men of genius and their works. Pascal's Provinciales and Boileau's Satires were published in 1660. Molière's "Ecole des Maris" and "Ecole des Femmes" were played in the following year. Should "Tartuffe" be represented or not was the question later. Then did Racine display his powers in "Andromaque," and come forward as the heir of Corneille's genius.

On the death of Cardinal Mazarin, Louis naturally adopted the ministers whom he found in office. These were Fouquet, Letellier, and Lionne. The first was superintendent of finance, the second secretary of state, Lionne master of diplomatic and foreign relations. The king purposely avoided calling to his council, except for merely show occasions, or trusting with office any of the nobles of his court and kingdom. Even the humble instruments whom he did consult and employ he sought to confine, each to his specialty. Few as were the members of his council, they were still divided. Fouquet had found his way into the confidence of Mazarin. After having served the cardinal's cause as procureur-général, in which capacity he first neutralised, and then bought up the opposition of the parliament, Fouquet demanded and obtained the office of superintendent or finance minister. His management of it during the last years of the war had unavoidably been a series of expedients and disorders, the raising of money in any way or at any sacrifice. All ideas of economy, of order, of accounts, were so totally out of the question, that Mazarin, whilst providing for the public service and interests, also took large care of his

own. As late as 1651 and 1652 he had been straitened for money, and to avoid a recurrence of such a misfortune he grasped at and amassed every source and means of wealth. As Mazarin understood little of financial and treasury affairs, Fouquet was the instrument, and Fouquet, in helping his patron also helped himself. If Fouquet imitated Mazarin in greed, he surpassed the cardinal in sumptuous expenditure. Whilst the cardinal filled his town palace with the choicest pictures, statues, and volumes, Fouquet spent all that luxury and extravagance could suggest on his country house at Vaux. Nor did he, like Mazarin, practise economy at one end whilst launching into extravagance at the other. The cardinal, when he gave up the public property to Fouquet, committed the management of his private fortune and affairs to a man of a very different character, Colbert. Long kept down in an inferior position, almost one of domesticity, Colbert did not contract the expensive and dissolute tastes of Fouquet. He was the steward of Mazarin, fattening his calves, taking care of his *basse cour*, and on venturing to offer advice to his patron, taking care to affirm that he never meddled with politics.*

Such an humble instrument was far more to the taste of Louis than Fouquet, who was imprudent enough to rival the king not only in parks and palaces but in his amours. He had offered a large sum of money to La Vallière. Yet Louis was generous to hint to Fouquet that bygones were bygones, and that if he would henceforth be honest, make no further *alienation* or mortgage of revenues, and give the king a true account of the finances, and how they might be recovered, past dilapidations should be forgotten. But Fouquet had not the discernment or the good fortune to perceive that Louis could not be treated like Mazarin. He deemed the king's scrutiny of the finances and business in general

* Correspondence of Colbert. Cheruel's Memoirs of Fouquet.

CHAP. XXXV.

as an effort of which he would soon tire. Instead, therefore, of giving him true information he merely sought to amuse and deceive him, whilst continuing to plunder for himself. In the four years previous Fouquet had sunk in mortgages ten millions of revenue. After this remonstrance of the king and his own promise, he proceeded to mortgage little short of a million more (800,000).* Of course the account of receipts and expenditure which he furnished the king, were cooked to cover such dilapidation. The precaution was vain, since Colbert, whom the king had appointed one of the intendants of finance, furnished the monarch in private with his accounts, and with the means of detecting Fouquet's dishonesty. The political schemes and conduct of the superintendent were as culpable as his financial. Foreseeing the possibility of disgrace, he had purchased the port of Belle Isle as a government, and proceeded to arm it as a fortress and a place of retreat, as Richelieu and Mazarin had thought to do with Morbihan or Havre. Reports of these precautions were brought to the king, who had also fears of seeing himself embarrassed by factions similar to those of the preceding reign. He therefore dissembled with Fouquet. The latter, as procureur-général, could only be brought, if accused, before the united chamber of parliament. To deprive him of this privilege, he was tricked into giving up the place. The king, he perceived, had been mollified by Mazarin's surrender of all his property previous to his decease. Fouquet now sold the procureur-generalship, and paid the purchase-money into the treasury. After such an act of self-sacrifice Fouquet thought he might fête the king, and invited him accordingly to see the splendour and enjoy the festivities of Vaux. Louis went, determined to dissemble, but could scarcely persevere, being so indignant at the display and the pretensions of Fouquet, that he proposed arresting

* Correspondence of Colbert.

and sending him to prison on the spot. The queen mother prevented the explosion. And it was only after the lapse of a month, during a visit which the court paid to Britanny, that Fouquet was arrested at Nantes, and sent to the Bastille for trial. It lasted several years, and formed the principal topic of the time. For Fouquet had very many friends. Madame de Sevigné is one of the most illustrious. He had paid court to her, was denied her love, but contented to secure her friendship. Fouquet, too, was the originator of that generous government patronage extended to letters, science, and the arts, which Louis and Colbert afterwards adopted. Corneille and Lafontaine were favoured by him; Molière and Scarron his debtors. In the long imprisonment and trial of Fouquet for financial malversation, public opinion was thus far more favourable to him than to the court and king, or to Colbert and the other ministers who joined in persecuting or convicting him. That he took and appropriated large portions of the public revenue there could be no doubt, but Mazarin did the same. And as Fouquet made large advances from his own funds to the necessities of the state at divers epochs, it was difficult, if not impossible, to tell what sum was repayment and what was rapine. The majority of his judges, taking these things into consideration, sentenced Fouquet to exile and confiscation of property—a sufficient punishment. Louis the same evening uttered the revengeful and unmanly regret that the accused had not been condemned to death, for he certainly would have sanctioned the execution. He indeed commuted the sentence to one as severe, substituting for exile an imprisonment for life in the fortress of Pignerol.* (1664.)

Colbert succeeded not indeed to the dignity, but to the real authority of finance minister, and he at once proceeded to introduce order and economy into the ad-

* Proces de Fouquet. Memoir of the time.

CHAP. XXXI.

ministration. His first act, a colossal one, was to cancel the greater number of financial places, taking means at the same time for indemnifying the holders. How enormous were the abuses and dilapidations of these officers and collectors of revenue appear from the figures of eighty-four millions as the gross receipts raised, whilst but thirty-one were counted as the ordinary or available revenue. The rest was absorbed in local charges and the cost of levying. Whilst striking at the permanence and independence of financial functionaries, Colbert prepared for the abolition of the whole system. The purchasable value of place in France was then estimated at 420 millions sterling. And as each holder indemnified himself somehow or another for the purchase, the sum was an enormous burden upon the country.

The debts which weighed more palpably on the revenue were the mortgages or *alienation*, and the *rentes* or regular debts. Of the 31,000,000 ordinary revenue, 9,000,000 were alienated. The greater part of the domains were also mortgaged. Colbert proceeded against both classes of state creditors with equal severity and injustice. Taking for granted Louis the Fourteenth's favourite maxim, that all the property of his subjects was his own, the legitimate inference from it was, that all who had taken mortgages or alienations had robbed the state of so much, and all who had been the king's creditors wronged him in the same proportion. Colbert, therefore, established a tribunal for inquiring into debts due to the state, and contracts made with it. Fouquet, at the same time, being put upon his trial, and menaced with death, was a spectacle *in terrorem* to induce the accused capitalists to compound with the minister. They did so, and he obtained from them 110,000,000 as fines, besides probably as much more in the cancelling of debts.*

* Clement's Memoirs of Colbert. Joubleau. Colbert's Memoir on Finance. Forbonnais.

Those who had accommodated the government with temporary loans having been thus summarily dealt with, Colbert turned to the *rentiers*, or stockholders. During the recent civil war, the frequent syncopes and permanent necessities of Mazarin's government, many, no doubt, had purchased stock at a very low price. Colbert now proposed to pay each holder merely the regular interest of his purchase money, whatever that might have been. What was harder still, those of whom the government had bought up the *créances*, were ordered to disgorge the difference between the sum received and the current price. This draconic order amounted to a complete cancelling of the loans of several years. Even the original debt or *rentes* upon the Hôtel de Ville, which had fallen in the market value solely because the government did not pay the interest, the said government now took advantage of the diminution of value caused by itself, to reduce to one-half, and, in some cases to one-third of the original capital. For this act of bankruptcy or state robbery, Colbert has been awarded the civic crown by most historians. Such a reform of finance, or such a diminution of public expenditure might be accomplished at any time in any country, that had the fortune to possess an absolute government, without much genius in the financier. All required was the reckless dishonesty of the sovereign, and the pusillanimous character of the people. It was by acts like these that Colbert inaugurated his attempt to rival the Dutch in wealth and trade!

By such acts, however, Colbert was able to raise the mount of net revenue from 32,000,000 to 60,000,000, whilst decreasing the *taille*, which weighed upon agriculture, and the salt tax, so severe upon the poor. This increase of revenue enabled the minister to provide for Louis a fleet of fifty-nine sail, some of which carried 80 guns and 600 men. There was, at the

CHAP. XXXI.

same time, a well-equipped and efficient army of 125,000 men, double of what any other country could muster. It is no wonder that a young monarch, finding himself thus provided with the elements of victory, was eager to employ them, and unscrupulous in finding pretexts for the purpose.

Those ideas of absolute authority over his subjects which the king had been taught, and which he cherished, led him naturally to treat his brother sovereigns with equal arrogance. His quarrel and triumph over Spain and Rome about precedence have been mentioned. Those writers who upheld, and sought to prove, the supremacy of the French crown, did not restrict their arguments or conclusions to mere ceremonies. The Frank monarchs, who had their seat of power westward of the Rhine, it was argued, always extended their sway beyond that river; and not only was the royal race of France superior to the imperial one of Germany, but it possessed a suzerain claim to German countries. The acquisitions of Alsace and Lorraine were thus not conquests from the empire, but just restitutions to the ancient crown of France.* Whilst such pretensions as these claimed for the young king the old supremacy of Charlemagne over German kingdoms and provinces, it could not be forgotten that Belgium had been the residence of the first French kings, and the seat of their power. And as Tournay and Aix were much nearer than the Rhine, and much more profitable prizes as well as more easy conquests, the ambitious views of Louis were chiefly turned in that direction. Spain still retained the sovereignty of these provinces; but not only were they exhausted by war and by misrule, but the days of their monarch were drawing to a close, whilst the prospect of his leaving an heir was doubtful in the extreme. One infant had died

* Aubery, Justes Prétentions du Roi sur l'Empire (Paris, 1667), and his previous publication, 1662, avec Privilége du Roi.

in November 1661. Some days later the queen gave birth to another, but of such weakly frame and sickly temperament that his long survival was unhoped for. The total extinction of the Spanish House of Austria seemed indeed so imminent at the period of the death of Mazarin, that the first diplomatic efforts of Louis were directed to obtain from the Spanish crown the cancelling of that act by which the infanta, Maria Theresa, had, on her marriage with Louis the Fourteenth, renounced all right in part or in whole to the Spanish succession.* Louis, indeed, pretended that the act was already cancelled from the non-payment of the queen's dowry, and the non-execution of the clause and conditions accompanying that renunciation. Spanish ministers, Don Luis de Haro, and the Duc de Medina Torres, had the baseness to sanction in conversation Louis' view of the nullity of the oath, in order to prevent his pressing for payment of the dowry. But not satisfied with this, Louis pressed in 1662 for a formal cancelling of the renunciation by the Spanish monarch. He offered to abandon and cease to support Portugal, if this were granted. But Louis had stipulated, in the Treaty of the Pyrenees, not to support Portugal; and the Spanish could not see the advantage of a second promise from a prince who did not think himself bound to observe the first which had been as solemnly made.

The negotiation took place in 1662, and came to nothing at a time when Louis began to think that the sickly heir to the Spanish crown might still survive his father Philip many years. Instead, therefore, of awaiting the extinction of that house, he proposed putting forward a claim to Brabant and certain portions of the Spanish Netherlands, as accruing to his queen, born of the first marriage of the King of Spain, and not to that monarch's male heir by his second marriage. Such a

* Mignet, Succession d'Espagne.

CHAP. XXXI.

law did rule the descent of private heritage in Brabant, but not fiefs, and certainly not the crown. But the right called that by *evolution* sufficed a monarch who had upwards of 100,000 soldiers.

The resistance of Spain to such a claim was inevitable; but without troops or money, that could be of little avail, unless England, or Holland, or Germany intervened. Louis therefore directed his diplomatic efforts to gain the friendship or tolerance, and, failing of these, to neutralise the opposition, of these powers. With England the task seemed easy. Charles the Second, who had sold Dunkirk to France, could not object to selling the independence of Flanders also for a price. Holland was more formidable, because more honest. But the French had a friend in the government of that republic, who would go great lengths to come to an understanding with them—John De Witt.

This pensioner or deputy, and real governor of the province of Holland, chiefly owed his authority to the circumstance of the representative of the House of Orange being a child, and his party in consequence rendered powerless for the time. Though the foundation of his ascendency was thus temporary, and at the same time narrow,—for his authority over all the provinces was merely obtained by his preponderance in the one state of Holland,—De Witt knew neither mistrust nor fear. As he showed* that all the seven provinces might be governed from Holland, so he deemed the little estate of Holland a match for any empire. It did not want allies. With its republican liberty and its trade, Holland could cope with any foes.

Strange that so stern a republican should have looked with a friendly eye upon France, and with no cordiality towards England, whether as republic, pro-

* De Witt's Memoirs.

tectorate, or monarchy. The truth was, rivalry of trade had sprung up to poison the sources of political friendship. Under the Stuarts, too, the English government was of course Orangeist in its Dutch politics, and this was the horror of the republican De Witt. He therefore leaned to France, and although its government looked with greed upon the Spanish Low Countries, De Witt hoped to content the French with a moderate share of them. They had negotiations without end as to this partition. De Witt had thought of a division of the country between France and Holland by a line drawn from the coast, which would have given Flanders to the latter country; but the merchants of Amsterdam were horrified at the idea of Antwerp becoming Dutch, and consequently its merchants their rivals. The pensioner therefore proposed that the greater portion of the ten provinces should become cantons like Switzerland, and form a Catholic republic, France and Holland each taking those towns situated within their reach, or in the direction which suited them. Nothing could be more opposed to the views of Louis; but he dissembled his objections and even encouraged De Witt to proceed with his scheme. The Dutch minister found difficulties and objections even in the states of Holland, which liked a Flemish republic as little as a French Flanders. And he was obliged to demand of Louis a promise not to invade or employ force, at least for a certain time, to take possession of the share allotted to him. The French king would make no such promise. And whilst negotiations were in this state, there sprung up war between England and Holland, which prevented either power from bestowing care or attention to other objects than their own preservation. Louis, being bound by treaty to help the Dutch, was called upon then to do so. He hesitated to break with England, and when at length obliged to declare war, his fleets, though receiving orders to co-operate with

CHAP. XXXI.

the Dutch, were never found by the side of them in action.

The war between these naval powers was still at its height, when Philip the Fourth expired in September 1665. By his will this monarch renewed the exclusion of the French queen from any portion of the Spanish inheritance, which, in case of the failure of the direct heirs, was to lapse to the Austrian branch, the emperor at the same time marrying the second infanta. He thus became the direct competitor and opponent of Louis the Fourteenth and of his pretensions upon Flanders. But the latter had more authority than the emperor upon the Rhine and in North Germany; and the French king rightly calculated that his armies would have conquered the Low Countries ere the court of Vienna could be fully alive to the danger.

As to England, whilst its ministers and parliament were zealously engaged in the prosecution of the war against French and Dutch, Louis contrived to open secret communications with Charles the Second, by which peace was concluded between them, and a mutual agreement taken not to renew hostilities for a twelvemonth. Thus secure of English neutrality, whilst counting on German torpidity and Spanish exhaustion, Louis having collected an army little short of 60,000 men, in the spring of 1667, heralded its march by a manifesto, claiming Brabant and the best fortresses of the Low Countries by right of his queen. In May some 35,000 troops, under Louis himself and Turenne, advanced and took Charleroi without difficulty, the Spanish governor of the Low Countries being unable to offer resistance. Ten thousand men at the same time, under D'Aumont, invaded maritime Flanders, reducing its towns, and finally joining Turenne before Tournay. Ten thousand more, under Créquy, were posted at Verdun, to obviate any hostilities from Germany. Europe was taken by complete surprise. The

courts of Madrid and Vienna were unequal, however they might have agreed, to the present defence of the Low Countries. Lille itself, the great bulwark of West Flanders, was reduced in seventeen days by Vauban, who set to work forthwith to render its recapture impossible, whilst Marsin, who hovered in the vicinity with a large body of Spanish cavalry, suffered himself to be intercepted by Turenne, and put to a complete rout. But whilst the hitherto great powers of Europe, Spain and Austria, were paralysed by the vigour of the French king, the lesser powers of the north became alarmed and jealous of this success. De Witt, indignant but cautious, sent to ask Louis with how much of Flanders he could be content. The French king, alarmed in his turn at a possible coalition, said he would be content with Luxemburg in addition to the conquests he had made.*

Of the German princes the Grand Elector of Brandenburg was the foremost to express fears that Germany was menaced by the French conquest of the Low Countries. It was the first symptom which Prussia gave of being destined to take that position as head of North Germany which Austria had from weakness abandoned, and which Sweden, notwithstanding its efforts, was not German enough to occupy. But Brandenburg was bought off, partly by a bribe to the elector's favourite, partly by Louis waiving the pretensions of the House of Condé to the throne of Poland, and promising to support those of Neuburg instead.†

But though Brandenburg failed at this time, public opinion in United Germany embraced the cause of the independence of the Low Countries. The Elector of Mayence had hitherto been the chief of the French party beyond the Rhine, as De Witt had been in

* Œuvres de Louis XIV. Mignet.

† K. A. Menzel, Neuere Geschichte der Deutschen; Mignet; Carlyle's Frederic.

CHAP. XXXI.

Holland. But both were shaken by the too manifest ambition of Louis. And if the elector's own mind might not have sufficiently awakened him to the wisdom and patriotism of shaking off French predominance, a lawyer at that time was introduced into his service and councils who had the discernment to perceive and the genius to express the German feeling. This young lawyer and politician was Leibnitz. Soon after his entering the court of the elector, this potentate fell off from French partisanship, and mainly contributed to suspend and break up that alliance of the Rhine which he himself had formed for the support of French interests.*

The last months of 1667 were spent in diplomatic efforts made by Louis to tranquillise the Dutch, and by the Dutch to bring the French king to a final arrangement. They were prepared to yield much if Louis would waive all future claims to the Spanish succession, and thus fix bounds to his own ambition. This was precisely what the French king wished to avoid, and seeing the obstinacy of the Dutch, he turned simultaneously to London and Vienna. To the Austrians he proposed the partition of the Spanish monarchy, after the death of the reigning sovereign. France was to have Belgium; Franche Comté, Naples and Sicily; Navarre, the Philippines and the towns on the coast of Africa. The House of Austria was to keep Spain, the Milanese, Tuscany and the West Indies.

At the very time when the House of Austria was consenting to this pusillanimous surrender, northern powers, in obedience to public opinion, were leaguing for the maintenance of the balance of power and for erecting barriers to the ambition of France. The idea originated where it could have been least expected to take birth, in the councils of Charles the Second. Louis

* Œuvres de Leibnitz, edition of De Careil, with introduction.

had made large offers, but not large enough in the opinion of Charles' councillors. Even the Duke of Buckingham, the member of the cabinet most inclined to France, thought that England under the Stuarts should have as good terms as England with Cromwell, who looked to have Ostend and Nieuport, as well as Dunkirk, for its co-operation in the French conquest of Spanish Belgium.* But Louis, notwithstanding the precedent of Mazarin, would not give up a town, much less a seaport, and Arlington recommended a league with Holland in order to bring Louis to reason. Bridgman, who had succeeded Clarendon as chancellor, was of the same opinion, and Sir William Temple was despatched to the Hague with power to conclude a treaty for the protection of Belgium. De Witt, however previously well inclined to France, was aware that Louis was insatiable. He grasped at the offer, and a triple alliance was concluded† on the 23rd of January, 1668, between England, Holland, and Sweden (the envoy of the latter power declaring all along that he was ready to join, on the condition of being subsidised, the other two powers), for the frank, honest, and not exorbitant purpose of compelling the King of France to be contented with the conquests that he had already made.

Louis received the signification of the Triple Alliance without surprise. He had for some time perceived that his acquisition of the Spanish Low Countries could not be effected without exciting the hostility of the Dutch. To engage in a war with them required a larger force and greater preparations than he had made. Besides, he had just concluded a treaty for partitioning the Spanish monarchy with Austria, which implied that the empire too should have leisure to prepare the means of fulfilling it. Louis therefore determined to

* Mignet. † Temple's Letters.

CHAP. XXXI.

accept, to a certain degree, the demands and offers made by the Triple Alliance. But lest this should seem the result of fear, or wear the semblance of recoil, he resolved to undertake, in the early months of 1668, an important and glorious though facile conquest, which would not only extend his reputation, but bring him commodious means of exchange and concession in the ensuing negotiations.

Since the French had made themselves master of Bresse and of Alsace, the little province of Franche Comté, which lay between them, was virtually theirs whenever they pleased to invade it. Spain possessed the nominal sovereignty, but it was so remote that the Franche Comtois governed themselves, as the name indicated, sending a trifling tribute to Madrid. Besançon, the chief fortress of the province, was an imperial city, governed by its magistrates and municipalty.

The Swiss alone had the interest and the power to defend the independence of Franche Comté. But Louis gave them no time. An army was with all possible secrecy collected in Burgundy, of which Condé was governor. Not to leave this, however, to the prince, the king himself took the command, and appeared before Besançon on the 6th of February (1668).* It was not then the fortress it is now, and although its citizens were most disinclined to change masters, they were unprepared for resistance. After its reduction Louis marched to Dole, the capital, which surrendered to him on the assurance that it should preserve its parliament and franchises. Within a fortnight's space Franche Comté was subdued; and Louis on his return to St. Germains, ready to receive the envoy of the Triple Alliance. He at once granted their demand for a time, in order that plenipotentiaries might meet at Aix-la-Chapelle.

* Hist. de Louis XIV, par Pelisson. Rousset, Hist. de Louvois.

Although the alliance of the Three Powers was really for the purpose of checking France, it ostensibly declared its intention of compelling Spain to give up the conquests made upon it by France, or, in lieu of them, an equivalent. Seeing the French in the full tide of victory, and none of the Spanish towns in the Low Countries able to resist, the Triple Alliance interfered to save them. Louis, having covered his honour by the conquest of Franche Comté, acquiesced, and the Spaniards remained the sole aggrieved party. The aim of its negotiator, the Marquis of Castel Rodrigo, in consenting to the treaty of peace, which he was obliged to do*, was less to conclude a permanent peace than to arrange a temporary one, which would leave the policy and attitude of France as menacing as ever, and thus secure for future and not distant wars the vigilant support of England and of Holland.

France, by this treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle, concluded in May, 1683, acquired Furnes, close to Ostend, with Lille and Courtrai, the latter within a few leagues of Ghent, whilst St. Omers, a long distance southward of both, remained Spanish. The French frontier then went by Ath to Charleroi, leaving Cambray surrounded by French fortresses. The Spanish negotiators preferred leaving their remaining possessions in Flanders, thus at the mercy of the French, to the cession of Franche Comté. This province Louis evacuated, after dismantling its towns, in order not to make enemies of the emperor and of the Swiss. His ambition at this moment was steadily, though stealthily, directed towards acquiring the frontier of the Meuse, if not the Rhine.†

Two years of successful war inflated the taste, as well as the politics, of Louis the Fourteenth, and

* "Qu'il falloit passer par là ou par les fenêtres," writes Temple, speaking of Spain.

† Mignet, Succession d'Espagne; Pelisson's Hist. de Louis XIV; Dumont, Traités; Temple's Letters.

CHAP. XXXI.

prompted him to crave for new, more expensive, and more fastuous pleasures, as well as to pursue higher and more ambitious aims of policy. In those years his attachments for the retiring and gentle La Vallière gave way to an admiration of the more showy and haughty Montespan. The king at the same time began to dislike a residence in the capital, where his ways and his society were overlooked. The care of Louvois and of Colbert had hitherto been directed to the completion and embellishment of the Louvre. Its eastern façade, planned and commenced at this time by an improvised architect, Perrault, stands as a monument of their taste. But Louis came more and more to show his preference for Versailles, whither he at last transferred his residence altogether, and upon which he expended in peace sums as enormous as those absorbed by his war campaigns.

This mode of gratifying his taste for fastuousness and privacy combined was not without important social and political results, especially in the relations of prince and people. The removal of the court to Versailles estranged altogether the monarch from the middle and lower classes of his capital, and gave rise to an antagonism, dangerous when wit, intellect, and professional eminence were developed in Paris, in contrast with the dull solemnities of a fastidious court. According to some, the change was pernicious even to the class which exclusively enjoyed means of access to the monarch's society. If we are to credit the Marquis de La Fare, men became more debauched, and their language, as well as women's conduct, marked by more effrontery. The want of a female of the first rank, dignity, and worth to preside over these assemblages, left them open to the worst example and the worst influence. And when, at a later date, the favour of Montespan gave way to that of the pious and decorous De Maintenon, Versailles became but another Escurial,

where immorality and dissipation were covered with the austere cloak of the convent. In Louis the Fourteenth's reign, however, the divorce between the court and intellectual society was completely hidden by the patronage which that prince flung to the poets and men of letters of his time, and which made Racine, Molière, and so many other men of genius, the most glorious illustrations of his reign.

During the first years of Louis' personal administration, throughout his first war, and even afterwards, the policy and the conduct of the French government were directed by the habits and traditions which Richelieu and Mazarin had left. Every question was cautiously considered, every means discussed, and neither pique nor passion were allowed to interfere with the great aim of aggrandising France and extending its influence over Europe. As years advanced, and, with them, not only the power of Louis, but his own exaggerated idea of this importance, the personal feeling of the monarch came more and more to predominate, and the wisdom of older statesmen to be less listened to. A maxim with the two great cardinal statesmen had been not to allow the prejudices of domestic policy to affect the guidance of foreign affairs. France was to be Catholic, unity of religion and administration constituting its strength, and its government was purely monarchical for the same reason. But far from following these into any jealousy or dislike towards republican or towards Protestant states, French policy went to support both, constituting, as they did, the pride and the distinction of the northern states of Europe against the House of Austria. Louis, till 1677, had followed this rule, and allowed Lionne, that able minister who continued Mazarin's policy, to do so. But when at this epoch the Dutch strove to erect a barrier against his ambition, he turned against them, not with political so much as with vindictive feelings. He denounced them as republicans and as heretics,

CHAP. XXXI.

and, with no very definite view of the future, aimed at treading them out of existence.

Louis' enmity to the Dutch found no opposition from his ministers. Even Lionne admitted that they required to be humbled and chastised. And Colbert, the great home minister and financier, had entered upon a war of commercial exclusion and prohibition with the Dutch, which angered and alarmed them even more then French conquests in Flanders. It was Fouquet, indeed, who promulgated in 1659 a decree similar to the English navigation act of eight years previous, levying half a livre a ton upon all foreign vessels. But Fouquet was a ship-owner himself, and had embarked in large enterprises of trade. In 1664 the king's policy required that the Dutch should be conciliated, and in consequence the tonnage duty was reduced one half. That imposed upon the import of manufactured goods was moderated too. In 1667, the Dutch becoming hostile, Colbert seized the opportunity to impose double the amount of duty established in 1664, thus introducing in all its rigidity the system of protection.*

France, from the extent of its surface, the fertility of its soil, and the variety of its climate, had indeed more pretexts than most countries for adopting the system of making its own soil suffice for its own wants. The principle received a rude contradiction in 1662, which brought a dearth, and when the tonnage duty, repealed too late, had the effect of keeping out supplies of food. Necessary accompaniments to the exclusion of foreign vessels and manufactures were the attempts of govern-

* It is almost needless to observe, that Colbert's prohibitive system told as much against England as against Holland, and tended to unite those two maritime nations against France. Woollens formed the staple of English exports to France. The duty on these was raised to one-twelfth in 1664, and that doubled in 1667; whilst the French exports to England of linen, paper, and silk had but to pay from $3\frac{1}{2}$ to 5 per cent. The English also put a duty on French wines. But as it did not diminish the sale, the English negotiators pleaded that the English consumer paid that duty, not the French. State Papers, France, 281.

ment to supply the requisite commodities from native sources. Colbert was most active in establishing fabrics, advancing capital for them, and in founding companies for colonisation and trade. These enterprises could, however, only be carried on by the capital of the country, which, if left to itself, its proper use directed by the intelligence and perfect freedom of the class possessing it, would have attempted and succeeded no doubt in some few of the obvious schemes of mercantile conquest and gain. But Colbert was for doing all at once. He set on foot companies for the East Indies and the West, for Canada, for Madagascar, and places in the remotest corners of the universe. Colbert sought to embrace the world with commercial conquest, as Louis to lord it over Europe with the sword. The ambition of the monarch of course defeated that of the minister, the smallest portion of whose plans could only be accomplished in peace. But independent of this, the minister defeated himself. He opened subscription lists for the great companies, as Richelieu had done, in imitation of the Dutch. But the French still wanted the capital, the experience, and the habits of free action indispensable for such enterprises. A few subscriptions were obtained, government came forward to aid the enterprise with more and forthwith the company proceeded to borrow on fabulous interest. Of course, in whatever degree the public provided the funds, the government undertook the management. The result was, that as there is no royal road to a knowledge of mathematics, neither was there one to commercial wealth or colonial empire. Colbert at the same time hoped to steal the sources of Dutch wealth and power by navigation acts, prohibition, and monopolies. But without Dutch liberty, energy, and tolerance, all the efforts and enthusiasm of the French government, and those who trusted it, were completely thrown away.

Animated by these various causes of enmity to the

CHAP. XXXI.

Dutch, Louis resolved to concentrate the whole power of his intellect and his empire upon their destruction. Fully appreciating their strength, he took years to prepare for the attack upon the republic. These were employed in diplomatic efforts—clearly and carefully detailed by Mignet—to deprive Holland of every ally, and isolate the republic from all sympathy or aid. It must be confessed that the Dutch left themselves open to much invidious enmity, by churlish and ungenerous policy. England had, with more reason and maritime resources than France, begun to compete with the Dutch at sea and on distant shores. This fired them with fierce rivalry against our island, and led to the gigantic and glorious struggle of their navy against ours, thus expending in vain rivalry the courage, the blood, and the wealth, which might have maintained not only the independence of Holland and Zealand on the continent, but founded and extended an empire. But the merchants of Amsterdam dreaded more than aught else an extension of territory that would have made Antwerp Dutch, and De Witt, who represented them, resisted the formation of an army, which might have fallen to the Prince of Orange to command. His political maxim was enmity to England and confidence in France.

The Triple Alliance, commended by the simplest rules of self-defence, was still a departure from the policy both of De Witt and Charles the Second. It was not difficult to break it as far as the latter was concerned. But the British Parliament felt its urgency, and saw that the Protestant religion and the interest of England in its maintenance were attacked by Louis in Holland. The Stuart brothers indeed favoured the designs of Louis, but his counsellors dissuaded Charles from hearkening to that dangerous policy; and even Buckingham opposed it, as implying a breach with Parliament and a stoppage of supplies; Arlington did so for

more comprehensive reasons. Such being ever the want of principle in these courtier-statesmen, that he, the friend of Temple, the upholder of the Dutch, and even of Spain against France, was induced to waive his objections and become the instrument of concluding a secret treaty with Louis by which Charles promised to become a Catholic, and to join in war against Holland, in order to obtain a portion of its spoil.* For this double treachery Charles was to be doubly paid, two millions of livres for the confession of Catholicism, and three millions annually for the troops and the vessels he was to furnish.

The conclusion of this treaty was counteracted for a certain time by the efforts of the Dutch and of Temple to induce the emperor to join the Triple Alliance. Spain used all its influence at Vienna in the same sense. But the emperor was betrayed by two successive ministers, Auerberg and Lobkowitz, both of whom, and no doubt in part from mercenary motives, strongly favoured the French alliance. The emperor Leopold suspected them, but his easy nature still hesitated between the advantage of a treaty with Louis the Fourteenth for partitioning the dominions of the crown of Spain, and the danger of allowing a rival house to snatch and secure such enormous aggrandisement. Whilst he wavered between the two policies, and at least delayed accepting the proffers of De Witt and Temple, the secret alliance between France and England was concluded through the influence of the Duchess of Orleans, Charles's sister. She accompanied Louis in evidently ambitious and inquisitive tours through the towns, even the Spanish towns,

* Bolingbroke well describes Charles's nature, his chief aim being to "render himself absolute at home, —to this end humble the Dutch, change their government, deprive his subjects of correspondence with a neighbouring Protestant and free state,—in a word, to abet the designs of France on the continent, that France might abet his designs on his own kingdom."

CHAP. XXXI.

of Flanders, and left him to meet and cajole Charles at Dover. This procured the signature of the secret treaty in June 1670.

The duchess was accompanied to Dover by Madlle. de Querouailles, destined by the French court to preserve Charles in its interests, a task which the future Duchess of Portsmouth effectually performed. This significant present to her brother, and the signature of the treaty, were the last acts of the Duchess of Orleans, who on returning to France, aggravated, by imprudently bathing in the Seine, at St. Cloud, an inflammatory pain in her side, of which she expired.* France attributed it to poison, and suspected her husband and other parties; Louis having entertained the same suspicions, but after a time dismissed them as groundless.

This conspiracy for the destruction of Holland by the two kings could not escape the discernment of Temple or the vigilance of De Witt. The refusal of all his offers by Louis sufficiently warned the Great Pensioner, who, it must be confessed, did not display the wisdom which might have been expected of him in such a conjuncture. To have conciliated one, if not both, of such potent enemies, in such a critical moment, would have been wise. The Dutch, in no dread of English armies, might certainly have conciliated the English people by a commercial and colonial policy less jealous and less fierce. They had foolishly provoked Louis by arrogant medals, and they now entered into a war of tariffs with Colbert, ill-judged and inopportune. Preparations for a war, more defensive than provocative against England, might have mollified that feud, while the organisation of an army and the employ of its military resources were imperatively called for by the menaces of France. But De Witt dreaded a large army, which must almost necessarily be under the command of the Prince of

* Madame de la Fayette's Life of Henriette.

Orange and render him predominant; whilst the navy, thoroughly republican in its habits and aspirations, constituted the glory of the country, and furnished the sole arm on which De Witt could bring himself to rely.

The Germans, indeed, seemed to grow more alive to the danger which threatened Holland than the Hollanders themselves. Their princes had all been tampered with by the agents of Louis, but public opinion, even that of the very courts, served to counteract the selfish or supine inclinations of the princes themselves. The Elector of Mayence, once the zealous partisan of France, now stood foremost to denounce French ambition; and when the Duke of Lorraine, the Elector of Treves, and other potentates, met at Schwalbach to take into consideration the menaced conquest of Holland by France, Leibnitz drew up for them an able paper, showing Germany to be no less menaced than Holland. "Germany," he said, "like Greece once, and Italy later, is the great apple of contention with the world. It is the ball for those who play at monarchy, and the battle-field for those who contest it. The first duty of patriotism is to rescue Germany from being made either the plaything of diplomacy or the field of the war-struggle. The princes have but to unite, in order to render the fatherland unconquerable. To do this is to cast a mountain in the way of the threatening torrent, and compel it to turn its course in another direction. Every country in Europe has its natural task assigned to it, that of combating barbarism: England and Holland in lands beyond the ocean; Austria in Hungary, where the Turks press on; France in Egypt. Let European swords be turned against the infidel foe, and leave Europe itself in independence and peace."*

* Leibnitz, Bedenken; De Securitate Publica. Leibnitz came later, sent by the elector to Paris, to preach the expediency of Louis

CHAP. XXXI.

Such were the views which Leibnitz expounded to the princes who met at Schwalbach (August 1670) and proposed raising a North German army to defend the Rhine against France and its allies. Louis, alarmed at the movement, took instant vengeance upon the Duke of Lorraine for joining in such a congress, by sending an army to occupy Nancy and his other dominions. This act, so different to the hitherto cautious policy of Louis, was dictated more by passion than prudence. It had an effect which nothing else had hitherto produced, that of rousing the emperor to a sense of portentous danger, and inspiring the Elector of Brandenburg with similar sentiments.

It had been the purpose of Louis, when he concluded the treaty with England, to commence active operations against Holland in the spring of 1671, but the attitude assumed by some of the German powers after the occupation of Lorraine, deterred him. Sweden hesitated. That power had unfortunately lost the independent spirit which once animated it, and was guided in its preference of Holland for France, or of France for Holland, more by amount of subsidy than by any zeal for Protestantism or desire to maintain the independence of secondary states. It was soon to pay the penalty of such selfishness, which was fully evinced in its treaty with France in December 1671, binding Sweden to attack the emperor if he undertook the defence of Holland against Louis. Fearing isolation, the emperor, in the same month, notwithstanding the urgent solicitations of Spain, also concluded an agreement with France, as-

the Fourteenth conquering Egypt. His arguments, though spurned by Louvois, seem to have had their influence upon Napoleon. But the German had a stronger argument then in the danger which threatened Europe from the Mahommedans. They had but recently conquered Candia, and defeated a body of French troops, at the head of which the Duke of Beaufort perished. The Memoirs of Navailles contain an account of the expedition.

suring it of imperial neutrality for at least one year.

The object of the French king in thus securing the aid or neutrality of all the German powers, was that he might be at liberty to attack Holland from the side where it was most vulnerable, that of Germany. He would have preferred, indeed, commencing his conquests by Flanders, but that would have forfeited the English alliance.* Mustering little less than 150,000 men, including his English and German auxiliaries†, Louis determined to march by the right bank of the Meuse, and cross the Rhine by one of its fords, eastward of its junction with the Wahal, so as to encounter no great fluvial obstructions to his penetrating into the seven provinces of the Dutch republic.

Condé and Turenne accompanied Louis. The former was for commencing by the siege of Maestricht, but the latter proposed to block it by the occupation of Maesyk, cross the Rhine at once, and strike a fatal blow ere the enemy had recovered from his first consternation. His advice was followed, and Maesyk occupied on the 15th of May.

In the first days of June the fortresses on the banks of the Rhine were invested. The Prince of Orange had recommended the abandonment of such small posts and the concentration of the means of defence in larger towns. De Witt overruled him, and was mortified that they held out but a few days. To the French crossing the main river of the Rhine there was no obstacle but its embranchments, called the Lech and the Yssel, which protected the Batavian islands and the provinces of Holland, and which were supposed to be defended by a Dutch army.

Rumour posted 60,000 Dutch, with 1200 guns, to

* Perwich's letters, S. P. France, 281. Quinci, Hist. Militaire.

† 146,000. Ibid.

CHAP. XXXI.

defend the passage of the Yssel. This was so far from being the case*, that the Prince of Orange, whom De Witt could not set aside from the command, had but ten pieces and 20,000 men, officered, says the Marquis de la Fare, by the sons of burgomasters who had never seen fire, and had no military experience. The French themselves were indignant at the slight resistance offered to them. The passage of the Lech, or of the Rhine, as it was called by the French in prose and verse, proved not bloodless. On the 9th of July the French cavalry, under the guidance of the Comte de Guiche, flung themselves into the stream where it was almost fordable. A regiment of Dutch was on the opposite shore, which, after some firing, retreated to a neighbouring field, protected by hedges and barriers. The Prince of Condé, with his son and some nobles of his followers, crossed over in a boat, and approached the field where the Dutch regiment was posted. The Prince de Marsillac called to them to lay down their arms, and they were about to obey, when the young Duc de Longueville, Condé's nephew, exclaimed, "*Give them no quarter! Kill! kill!*" The Dutch immediately recovered their arms and fired a volley, by which De Longueville and Guitry fell dead, and almost all the others wounded, including Condé, who had his wrist shattered, and was unable to serve during the campaign.†

On learning the passage of the French, the Prince of Orange withdrew with 13,000 men to Utrecht, which refused to receive him. The Hollanders were as frantic with despair as Louis was with arrogance, the extravagance of the sentiment on both sides marring the object of each. The Israelite merchants of Amsterdam sent to negotiate for their ransom. Others of the same

* Sévigné, Lettres, 199.

† King's letter to the queen, in his memoirs. Pelisson, Lettres Historiques, &c. Memoirs of Abbé Choisy, of Gourville, &c., and Œuvres de Louis XIV.

class proposed to emigrate, and transfer the wealth and population of the city to the colonies of the republic in the East. When accounts of this state of things reached Louis and his ministers, at the same time with suppliant envoys from the Dutch authorities, they were too elated to accept anything short of the most complete and unconditional submission. These envoys reached the French camp at Zeist on the 22nd, the day that Zutphen surrendered. The king refused to see them, or even listen to their proposals, unless they had full powers to treat and to submit. Groot, or Grotius, son of the great publicist, chief of the embassy, returned to seek fresh powers, but found an incipient revolution.

After his passing the Yssel, Louis had issued a most threatening proclamation to such Dutch cities as should refuse to surrender. The houses were to be burned and no quarter given. To enforce and execute such threats, the Marquis of Rochefort was sent with a troop of horse to Utrecht; it averted his visit by offers of submission, and by showing that the Prince of Orange was retiring from it. Rochefort then returned to Amersfort, and sent his cavalry galloping along the road to Amsterdam. It entered Naarden, on the Zuyder Zee, without resistance, a few troopers pushing on to the more important post of Muyden, within two hours of the capital, and containing the heads of all the sluices, which let in or kept out the waters far around Amsterdam.* The French who entered Muyden were so few and so unsupported, that the inhabitants were sufficient to drive them out, and put the town in a state of defence. This event occurred on the 21st, and on the following day, the 22nd, the Amsterdamers opened the sluices of Muyden, and let the sea in upon all the low

* For the affair of Muyden, see the report and letters of Rochefort in Rousset's Louvois, t. i. p. 369.

CHAP. XXXI.

grounds.* It was a sacrifice of the fertility and produce of their grounds for at least six years. These extreme measures solved the question of surrender, and precluded all attacks. The French had no means of pushing their conquest farther: could they even have penetrated along the causeways, they would have found the men-of-war floating outside the walls of the cities, and ready to defend them.

The passions of the multitude, as they withdrew into the towns from the French, and from the expected inundation, were in the mean time worked up to the highest pitch. The threats of Louis especially directed popular animosity to those statesmen who had been partisans of the French alliance, and who had failed either to conciliate or to repel French enmity. On the 21st two bands of assassins, by no means of the lower class of society, simultaneously attacked the brothers De Witt; John at the Hague, Cornelius at Dordrecht. The former was carried to his house suffering under four wounds. The party of the brothers was, however, influential in the states, and recommended submission to the French king. The nobles, who had landed property, and those towns open to the enemy, which formed the majority, were also for yielding, whilst the citizens of Amsterdam and Zeeland, protected by the sea or the dykes, were for holding out. These more obstinate and desperate members, however, absented themselves from the last meeting, and it was decided, by a majority of the states, to send back De Groot, with offers to give up all lands and territories beyond the Seven Provinces, including Maestricht, Bois-le-Duc, Breda, Berg-op-Zoom, Cluse, and Cadsand. They moreover offered ten millions indemnity for the expenses of the war.

There are critical moments in the lives of all men, and especially in the fortunes of princes. This was the

* Louis the Fourteenth's Mémoires Inédités, published by Rousset, tom. i. Mignet and the Dutch historians.

decisive one for Louis the Fourteenth, when called upon to accept or reject these offers. At an earlier period the monarch would have bethought him of his original policy and aims. Was it his purpose to conquer Holland and convert it into a French province? If so, all such proposals were to be rejected, and his armies pushed forward. But such a pretension avowed, would at once arouse the enmity of England and of Germany, and leave France exposed to that formidable coalition which its diplomatists had so long and so successfully laboured to avert. If Louis aimed merely to secure Flanders and the Low Countries, Dutch acquiescence, and even friendship, were the first aids and requisites to such a consummation; and to grant them fair and even generous terms at such a moment as then occurred, the sure and only way of attaining such an object. Had Lionne lived, that disciple of Richelieu and Mazarin would have pointed out such policy in a manner too striking for Louis to have resisted; or had he consulted Turenne, that commander, whose eye was as quick in politics as in war, would have rightly counselled him.* His foreign minister, Pomponne, indeed, made these representations. But the contrary advice of the Marquis Louvois, a minister who was for pushing war always to its extremities, whether of rigour or demand, coincided too well with the pride, the passion, and the fanaticism of Louis, and the Dutch proposals were rejected with disdain.

Instead of the line of the Main and Scheldt, Louis insisted on that of the Rhine and Wahal. He would have Nimeguen, as well as Delfzyl at the mouth of the Ems, by which he would always be enabled to cut the

* Turenne bids the government beware how, by advancing its conquests too far in Flanders, it does not drive the Dutch into the arms of England. Precisely what happened. Turenne to Louvois, Aug. 26, 1672. De Grimoard.

CHAP. XXXI.

Seven Provinces in two and menace Amsterdam. Besides, he demanded twenty-four millions indemnity, and the establishment of Catholic worship. And he showed his determination on this latter point, after the occupation of Utrecht, by seizing the cathedral or principal church, and at once installing the Catholic clergy and rites therein.*

It was one of the reliances of De Witt in this extremity, that the allies or the neutrals, who had supported the French king in this wanton attack, appalled by the fall of Holland and the magnitude of its results, would interfere to prevent them. Such hopes, with regard to England, at least, were fallacious. Halifax had been despatched to Louis, late in June, with instructions to oppose any treaty of peace without appearing to do so, until England had attacked the towns, which were to be its portion of the spoil.† Louis, indeed, already objected to give them, and offered instead "any number of the Dutch ships that England liked." ‡ On Louis insisting that plenipotentiaries should come from London with powers to treat, Buckingham and Arlington came over, but with demands as hard to the Dutch as those of Louis.

The Prince of Orange alone stood firm, both against France and England, to the great amazement of the French ministers. But the prince was aware that although England consented to act the jackal of France, the German powers were stirring. The Elector of Brandenburg was incensed at the occupation of the duchy of Cleves by the French, a province which belonged to him, and which he had only pledged to the Dutch for a debt. The Emperor Leopold at the same time was aroused from his lethargy, and a treaty for the

* Pelisson, Lettres Historiques, t. i. France, 282.

† Instructions to Halifax. S. P. Ibid.

‡ Godolphin's letter of June 28.

relief of Holland was signed between these potentates on the 13th of July, the emperor signing a week later a treaty at the Hague for the same purpose.

William of Orange was enabled to take advantage of this turning tide by the power which a popular revolution placed in his hands. Indignant with the results of De Witt's administration, but too manifest in the demands of France, and smarting under their own sufferings—for the entire populace was huddled into the towns, the farms and habitations given up to the waters that were let loose, to save them from the plunder of the French—the people rose during the last days of June in every town, deposed the magistrates, and insisted on the estates proclaiming William Stadtholder.

The character and the glory of this prince would have been more immaculate had not the revolution been followed by the sacrifice of the De Witt brothers, who, however mistaken and unfortunate their policy, were great statesmen and noble patriots. John de Witt, still weak from his wounds, resigned the pensionership of Holland early in August. An accusation was got up against his brother, Cornelius, that he had plotted the assassination of the prince. It was uttered by a fellow of worthless character. But these upright judges, who would have sifted and exposed the baselessness of such a charge, lay concealed from popular fury, and the few that remained, protected by their being friends of Orange, made use of their powers to imprison Cornelius De Witt and put him to the torture. That such should be the law or practice of the republic, remains as a gross blot upon the nature of its laws and the spirit of its government. Cornelius De Witt bore the agony with the constancy of a martyr. His ejaculations were those of the first verse of an ode of Horace, expressing the constancy of the Stoic. He endured his torments, but it was only to be made a decoy for his

CHAP. XXXI.

brother John.* The latter was summoned to the prison by a false message from Cornelius, who exclaimed on beholding him, and learning the circumstances, that their lives were beset, and all hope lost. It was but too true. A burgher guard that kept the prison was removed from it by a similar act of treachery. The ferocious mob then broke in, dragged forth the statesmen brothers, slew them with every barbarity that malice could suggest, and revelled in ignominious treatment of their remains. The Prince of Orange was satisfied with reflecting that he had not participated in a murder which he might perhaps have prevented (August 20).

William's implacable conduct to the De Witts was somewhat redeemed by the inflexible fortitude with which he rejected the offers and demands of France and England. Louvois was astounded. The English asked him, where was his resource? "To die in the last ditch," replied the prince. Louis still thought Holland a conquered country: the frost would deliver it to him. He determined to await its co-operation in the luxuries of St. Germain and Versailles. He therefore took a distant view of the steeples of his Dutch cities, rising out of the inundations and intermingling with the masts of the ships of war which protected them, returned to his capital and displayed his confidence and magnanimity by setting free 20,000 Dutch prisoners without condition and for small ransom. He thus presented the Prince of Orange with an army.†

The German alliance, too, soon produced its effects. Montecuculli, the imperial general, with the Elector of Brandenburg, approached the Rhine, and necessitated the drafting of large portions of the French army from

* Temple says, Cornelius de Witt being acquitted, angered the people, who were more exasperated by John going with a coach and four horses to fetch away his brother.

† Rousset's Louvois, t. i. p. 381.

the territories of Holland.: 16,000 men were given to Turenne to conduct into Westphalia, 18,000 to Condé to defend Alsace.* There were no further military operations in Holland for the year, save an attempt made by the French seeking in December to penetrate to the Hague with a body of horse, an enterprise which the thaw forced them very soon to abandon.† It was not the only or most striking occurrence, in which the elements seemed to combat for the Dutch. In July the English fleet approached the Texel, with the intention of landing troops upon the island, which must have sorely straitened and menaced Amsterdam; but an ebb tide, of more than double the usual duration, kept the hostile fleet from penetrating into the narrow passage of the Zuyder Zee, until a tempest came and dispersed it altogether.

Although the march of the imperial troops and of those of Brandenburg towards the Rhine had drawn the French from Holland, their forces were far from successful. Turenne baffled the imperial generals‡ the more easily, as their instructions were to menace and manœuvre rather than to fight. The French commander, finding this, directed his attacks against the Elector of Brandenburg, who, unsupported by his ally, was at last compelled to retreat into his own dominions. Other causes came to augment the disappointment of the grand elector. A slight to his envoy, offered by the imperial ambassador at Warsaw, had, when complained of, produced a still more slighting letter from the emperor.§ The claims of Brandenburg to the duchy of Cleves and the town of Magdeburg were repudiated,

* King's letter to Turenne, Aug. 23, and Louvois' to the same, Aug. 28. Grimoard.

† Condé was for employing infantry in great numbers simultaneously along all the causeways. See Pelisson.

‡ See his letters.

§ K. A. Menzel, Neuere Geschichte der Deutschen. For this campaign, and the disagreement between Brandenburg and Montecuculli, see, in Grimoard's edition, Turenne's letter of October 1672.

CHAP. XXXI.

and those of Saxony preferred. The elector, disgusted in consequence, made overtures to Louis, who, notwithstanding his desire to "humble the Prussian power," * closed with his offers, and concluded with him a separate treaty in the spring of 1673.

Yet the spirit and hopes of Louis had been so far lowered from the high tone of the previous year, that he accepted the mediation of Sweden, and the proposal to open a conference at Cologne. His demands of territory, too, were more moderate. But the Prince of Orange had become paramount in the councils of Holland, and he hoped everything from war: hostilities therefore continued. The French laid siege to Maestricht in July, and took it. But the advantage was more than counterbalanced by the increased vigour of the emperor's policy, who dismissed the French ambassador, Cremonville, and ordered Montecuculli, at the head of 40,000, to co-operate with the Prince of Orange. The latter re-captured Naarden in September (1673), and the imperial general, managing to deceive Turenne, who crossed into Alsace, floated his infantry down the Rhine, and, joining the army of the Dutch, invested and took Bonn. This gave them the means of coercing the Electors of Cologne and Munster, and punishing them for their alliance with France.

Louis was threatened with the loss of a more important ally. The co-operation of England with the French invasion of Holland went against the feelings of his parliament and people. Though the French had paid his English brother for such condescension, he could not afford subsidies sufficient to enable Charles to do without his parliament or defy it. The French envoy, Colbert de Croissy, finding himself unable to maintain the alliance, Louis sent over another ambassador, a Protestant, who, if equally unsuccessful with the court, might ingratiate himself with the

* Louvois to Turenne, March 14, 1673.

parliamentary chiefs, and mollify their anti-Gallican fierceness. But all was to no effect. The prospect of a war with Spain, if that with Holland was not terminated, threatened England with the loss of its remaining trade*, and Charles was compelled by this parliamentary and public pressure to conclude a peace with Holland in February 1574.†

The spring of 1674 found the hopes and pretensions of the French king still lower, whilst those of his enemies augmented. The Prince of Orange had formed an army that he could depend upon, whilst the number of his antagonists decreased, at least in infantry.‡ The French generals, unable to defend the line of the Rhine since the loss of Bonn, evacuated the Dutch cities altogether, and were ordered to guard the line of the Meuse. This much discontented one of them, Bellegarde, who absolutely refused for some time to withdraw the garrison from Nimeguen. The German princes, on these symptoms of French weakness, showed more hostility. Brandenburg, which had signed a treaty with Louis in 1673, broke it in the July of the ensuing year, in order to join a league against France, comprising the emperor, the Electors of Mayence and Treves, and the Palatine. The Elector of Cologne wavered; the envoys of France and of Austria disputing his alliance with unscrupulous zeal and reckless morality.§ Louvois proposed nothing less than taking and killing Isola, the imperial envoy.‖ The imperialists actually seized and carried off the Prince of Furstenberg (February 1674), himself a plenipotentiary accredited to the court of Cologne. This outrage broke off negotiations.

*, Temple.

† Temple's Memoirs. The English regiments under Monmouth, were, however, still left in the French service, where Churchill, the colonel of one of them, continued to study the art of war under Turenne.

‡ The French infantry force had decreased from 96,000 to 75,000. Louvois' letters in Rousset.

§ Temple's Memoirs.

‖ Louvois' letter in P. Grifflet, Lettres Militaires.

CHAP. XXXI.

Turenne took revenge for this, as well as for the defection of the Palatine, in ravaging the territories of this prince. Foreseeing that he must make peace, and obtain it by the abandonment of distant conquests, Louis turned his aims to those acquisitions which he might the most easily make as well as keep.

Franche Comté was one of these. The French, on evacuating it at the last peace, had destroyed the fortifications of the chief towns, which lay so defenceless, that the Maréchal de Navailles had of his own caprice almost captured them in 1673.* Louis definitively took possession of Besançon and Dole in May 1674, promising them their old parliament and estates—stipulations which he took care never to observe.†

Although the imperialists were too late to save Franche Comté, the allies mustered in force upon the Rhine. It was intended that three of their armies and generals should unite, and cross that river into Alsace. Turenne anticipated them, passed the Rhine himself, and attacked a portion of his adversaries at Sinzheim on the 16th of June. It was chiefly a cavalry action, which terminated altogether in favour of the French, who defeated the army before them, and marred their enemies' plans.‡ This engagement compelled both sides to draft forces to the Rhine from Flanders, where the Prince of Orange and Condé were opposed to each other. The latter, somewhat inferior in number, had posted his army in an entrenched camp, surrounded by the river Pieton, not far from Charleroi.

To draw the prince from this camp, rather than attack him in it, became the object of the Prince of Orange and Souches, the imperial general. For this purpose they marched past at a certain distance, on the 11th of August, 1674, in three separate divisions, the imperalists leading the way, the Dutch following,

* Mémoires de Navailles.

† Lavergne.

‡ Turenne's account, especially that in his letter to M. de Persode.

and the Spaniards forming the rear. The ground was broken by ravines and woods, and the imperialists had already marched out of sight, when Condé descended from his camp, about eleven o'clock, and attacked the Spaniards under Monterey, then posted in the village of Seneffe. From it the Spaniards were driven with the loss of one of their generals by the impetuosity and superior numbers of the French. They found insufficient support, as they retreated, in the village of St. Nicholas, but still the Spaniards and a few Dutch held their ground till two o'clock, when they were driven from the Priory of St. Nicholas, and Condé had achieved a victory, testified by the capture of a quantity of artillery, colours, baggage, and provisions. But as the enemy retreated still farther to the village of Fay, Condé led his troops in pursuit, until he found himself in presence not only of the Dutch but the imperialists, the entire force of the Prince of Orange's army, ready to receive him. Condé is blamed for not having withdrawn from before an enemy so fresh and so formidable. He says himself there was danger in doing so—that he might have been attacked in his retreat, and lost, with all he had captured, the glory of the day. He persisted, therefore, in the attack of Fay; but he met with such a determined resistance from the Prince of Orange at the head of Dutch and Germans, that he could make no impression. Assault after assault was repulsed with the most fearful slaughter on both sides; the French confessed to the loss of 7000 men, and reported that of the allies as much greater. Be this as it may, it was a triumph for the Prince of Orange to thus put an end to the uninterrupted successes of his foes, and baffle the most heroic of their generals. Night had suspended the battle, which Condé professed his determination to renew upon the morrow. At eleven o'clock the troops on both sides were still under arms, when the Prince of Orange

CHAP. XXXI.

ordered a general discharge of all arms, the French fell back, and soon dispersed in despite of all the efforts of their chief. The Prince of Orange took the opportunity to withdraw also. Both sides had had enough of fighting for the present.*

All eyes turned towards the prince, as holding in his hand the alternative of peace or war. The French government, after Seneffe, made overtures to him personally, offering him the hereditary Stadtholderat. When William was deaf to the proffer†, it was enhanced by that of the hand of a French princess, an illegitimate one it is true.‡ But Orange would for no personal consideration or advancement, place his country at the feet of France. His sole reply was to reinforce his army and lay siege to Oudenarde. It was merely to draw the Prince of Condé to another engagement, but the latter, content with interrupting the siege, declined the action. The Prince of Orange, however, succeeded in the capture of Grave.

But the brunt of war was upon the Rhine. The Palatine, furious at the devastation of his country, and the Elector of Brandenburg, with the troops of almost all north Germany, hastened to cross that river, under the guidance of the Duke of Lorraine. The French had not troops adequate to resist them, as Turenne but too clearly confessed when he summoned the *arrière-ban*, and ordered the mounted gentlemen of the seven provinces to hasten eastward and protect the recent conquest of their monarch. This once formidable cavalry, which had in former times rendered illustrious the *furia Francese*, now mustered in thousands in Lorraine, and it was hoped that good use might be made of them in defensive war.

* For the battle of Seneffe see Pelissier's Lettres Historiques; Mémoires de la Fare, et de Navailles. Relation du Combat de Senef. Histoire Militaire de Quincey. Letters of Condé and Rochefort in Rousset. Temple's Memoirs.

† Louvois' Letters to Estrades in Rousset.

‡ Mémoires de St Simon.

Turenne could not wait for their tardy movements. The imperialists crossed the Rhine by the bridge of Strasburg, fortunately for the French, not awaiting the Elector of Brandenburg and his troops. Turenne was thus able to attack the general of the emperor at Ensheim, in the neighbourhood of Strasburg (October 4). The battle was well contested, the cavalry of the emperor having at one time thrown the French battalions into disorder, but Turenne rallied them, and so galled the enemy with his artillery that they withdrew behind the numerous streams of the region.* But 30,000 Prussians were about to join them, whilst Turenne had but his *arrière-ban.* He was soon convinced of their inefficiency. The Duke of Lorraine beat up the quarters of the noblesse of Anjou, and took the whole of them prisoners. After a few similar reverses Turenne was obliged to dismiss the *arrière-ban;* the last appearance of the old French knights upon the battle-field, resembling that of a celebrated actor who had outlived his strength to an unprecedented length, so as to make the close of his career sadly contrast with its prime.

Turenne was unable to make head against his overpowering enemies, and he accordingly retreated over the Vosges into Lorraine. The season was too late for them to think of following him, and they quietly dispersed to winter quarters in Alsace. Turenne allowed himself and his army no such repose. He collected every possible force, and marched with it along the western declivity of the Vosges, and appeared at Belfort towards Christmas. In a few days after the French general attacked the imperialists in their quarters at Mulhausen, and so completely routed them that the entire regiment of the Prince of Porcien were made prisoners. This was amends for a similar accident befalling the armed nobles of Anjou. The Brandenburgers were quartered

* Turenne, Relation.

CHAP. XXXI.

at Colmar. Turenne approached them on the 5th of January, and a fierce contest ensued for the possession of the neighbouring village of Turkheim on a commanding height. It was undecisive, and the French had suffered considerable loss. But the Brandenburgers, general and soldiers, had conceived such a dread of the military superiority of Turenne, that they retired in the night. The imperialists followed their example, and ere January was over, there was not a soldier save those of Turenne in Alsace.

The last in the collection of Turenne's letters is that in which he, in a few modest words, takes credit for such vast military results. He entered Versailles in triumph, and returned in spring to that great field of his renown, the line of hills which enclose the valley of the Rhine. Here he found a worthy adversary in Montecuculli, the veteran general of Austria. The Brandenburgers had been obliged to move off to the defence of their own country against an invasion which the Swedes undertook as the best service they could render France. Fortune did not favour Louis, the two great military events of the year 1675 being most fatal to him.

The first was the battle of Fehrbelin, fought on the 28th of June, between the Grand Elector of Brandenburg, and the Marshal Wrangle, who commanded the Swedes. From the days of Gustavus Adolphus, Sweden had, as a military power, the superiority in North Germany, and stood first as the undisputed head both of it and of the Protestant cause. By the alliance with Sweden France neutralised the entire power of the North Germans. At Fehrbelin, the Grand Elector of Brandenburg, at the head of 6000 horse, chiefly militia, gallantly attacked the Swedish army, and completely routing it, put an end to its prestige. Fehrbelin commenced what Frederick the Great consummated, the erection of the electorate of Prussia to be the first power on the Baltic, and of North Germany. No event

could be more disastrous to France, for Sweden, despite the bravery of her soldiers, and the ability of her generals, was far and remote, and stood in the extreme need of French support and alliance to maintain its position and ascendency: whereas Prussia, a thoroughly German power, was able to pursue a much more national and independent policy, and raise up for France an antagonist rather than an ally in North Germany.

The other important event of the year took place a month later, on the 27th of July. The French and imperialists had been manœuvring for several days on the plain north-east of Strasburg; from thence Montecuculli entered the hills by the village of Sasbach, on the Acker. Turenne mounted an opposite eminence with some dozen of his officers to observe the movement, when a cannon ball from the village carried off the arm of General St. Hilaire, struck Turenne in the side, and prostrated the great military genius of the age. That the French, from being the pursuing army, became on the instant the pursued, and with difficulty fought their way back over the Rhine, is proof sufficient of the genius of Turenne, and the superiority which a command such as his gave to an army.

The war lasted three years after the death of Turenne, with a fortune and with events very much resembling those which had marked previous campaigns. France was exhausted, its population driven to destitution and despair by excess of taxation, with suspension of industry and trade. Yet its armies mustered in respectable force wherever the king in person was present—his war minister, Louvois, took care to pay him this homage; but elsewhere his generals commanded but few troops, and had, like Turenne, to compensate for paucity of numbers by genius and audacity, and, one is sorry to add, by ravages and the extreme of inhumanity.

Condé succeeded that general in the valley of the

CHAP. XXXI.

Rhine, but found it necessary to keep within an intrenched camp amidst the Vosges. The imperialists not only outnumbered him in Alsace, but, under the Duke of Lorraine, inflicted a serious defeat upon the French under the Maréchal de Crequy near Treves, which was followed by their capture of the town. Military command with such insufficient means, bringing inevitable reverses, disgusted Condé, who retired from active service, invalided more by gout and disappointment than by years. He withdrew to Chantilly and made it the centre of a society, more refined than that of Versailles, if less fastuous.

The campaign of 1676 was marked by the French losing Philipsburg, that fortress which they so carefully and so long maintained beyond the Rhine, for the facilities it afforded to plunder and harass the Germans. In the following year Marshal Crequy felt himself obliged to abandon the northern portion of Alsace, and even the fortress of Haguenau. The French contrived, however, to get possession of Friburg. The young Duke of Lorraine passed the Vosges, and transferred the war into his own duchy, which thus shared the fate of Alsace.

Indeed the war seemed to be carried on chiefly to exterminate the industrious population, and with no sensible advantage to the belligerents. It was too ubiquitous to be decisive. The Dutch, freed by their peace with England from the hostility of that power at sea, had swept the French from the ocean, and threatened the western coasts throughout the summer of 1676. The adjoining provinces were agitated by semi-disaffection. Several of them had despatched emissaries to Holland, promising to rise if they were succoured. Tromp sailed thither, but too late to co-operate with the disaffected. The Chevalier de Rohan, who was to have put Tromp in possession of a town towards the mouth of the Loire, was discovered and seized, paying with his head the forfeit of his treason. The Bordelais

broke into insurrection. But the Dutch had appeared off the coast too late, and Bordeaux was too inland for them to lend efficient aid to its rebellion.

The subjects of the Spanish crown were as much oppressed and inclined to mutiny as the French. The population of Messina had risen in 1674, partly in jealousy of privileges granted to Palermo. Their first act was to seek French aid, and in consequence both the French and Spanish forces deserted Roussillon, where they had been engaged, to defend or attack the Messinese. Vivonne, admiral of the French galleys, brother of Madame de Montespan, and friend of Madame de Sévigné, brought large reinforcements to Sicily, where he was proclaimed viceroy by the people of Messina. Unable to cope with the French fleet, which the care of Colbert had created, the Spaniards besought the Dutch to aid them. Admiral De Ruyter soon appeared in their waters. He found a worthy rival in Duquesne, and the seas between the Lipari Islands and Stromboli became the scene of glorious conflicts. The fiercest was that fought near Catania, on the 22nd of April, 1676, between some forty vessels on either side, in which the veteran De Ruyter perished.

But the heroic efforts of the Messinese to fling off the Spanish yoke, and of the French to aid their purposes, were alike idle. The English court, which had been drawn by the violent voice of parliamentary choler from siding with Louis to overwhelm the Dutch, was unable to maintain even its neutrality; and the French court, despairing of being able to hold the sea if England should join the Dutch, gradually relaxed in its determination of holding Sicily, allowed the war there to slumber through 1677, and soon after, a negotiation giving promise of success, abandoned the Messinese to the rage of their vindictive sovereign.

It would be difficult to trace the tortuous course of Charles the Second's policy, or to describe the able

CHAP. XXXI.

manner in which the French court played with the English king and the English nation. Louis sought to separate the latter from the Dutch by granting them all the ancient privileges and advantages which he denied to Holland, and which enabled the English to snatch away a large portion of their rival's trade. The Dutch and, above all, the Amsterdamers, leaned in consequence to peace, and the party of De Witt again raised its head, the very mediocre results of William of Orange's campaigns serving as its great encouragement. The campaign of 1676 was on the whole favourable to the French. They took Condé, compelling Orange to raise the siege of Maestricht. 1677 was marked by a still more formidable feat of the French in Flanders. They stormed and carried, in full daylight (March), the important fortress of Valenciennes, followed it up by that of Cambray, and then invested St. Omers. The Prince of Orange did all that an able general could do, ill supported by the Spaniards; their garrisons in the towns, few and ill-provided, made no zealous resistance, the inhabitants being even less inclined to defend them. The prince, however, resolved to save St. Omers, if possible. It was the Duke of Orleans who chanced to command at the siege. Seeing the advance of the prince, he marched to anticipate it on the road to Cassel, and the two armies met on the little river Peene, not far from that town, April, 1677. The Prince of Orange crossed the stream, and reached the abbey of that name, but was checked by the French, who in their turn crossed the Peene. The Dutch cavalry surprised them in the act, and drove them with a vigour which might have ended in their complete rout. But the Duke of Orleans, being little accustomed, or

* Although the inhabitants of these towns welcomed the French rather than resisted them, Louis condemned them each to build a citadel for him, at their expense, "which half ruined them, the citadel of Lille costing four millions of livres." Whiting's Letters. S. P. France, 295.

indeed allowed the opportunity, of playing the soldier's part, seized the opportunity, charged at the head of the troops in reserve, and compelled the Prince of Orange to retreat with considerable loss. It detracts not a little from Louis's character as great, that he should seem jealous of his brother's glory on this occasion, though grateful for his effort and success. The prince was never again entrusted with command.

Whilst the French thus not only held their own in Flanders, but gradually advanced in the conquest of its strongholds and the extension of their frontier, the exhaustion and discontent of the country compelled its government to wish for peace. But as the only peace they could accept was one with the retention of the great portion of their conquests, it was necessary not only to maintain a formidable attitude, but to show uninterrupted superiority and success in the field, in order to tempt the conference and congress. At the commencement of 1678, Louis had 280,000 soldiers in his pay.* This would not have been more than sufficient to make head against so many enemies that surrounded him, writes Bolingbroke, "all intent to demolish his power. But, like the builders of Babel, they spoke different languages; and as they could not build, neither could they demolish for want of understanding one another."

The Emperor had become an eastern potentate, far more intent on tyrannising Hungary, and resisting the French, than upon defending either Flanders or the Rhine. Spain, still more effete, was as incapable of providing for the defence of such remote possessions, and trusted to England and Holland for the defence of Flanders. In this great cause, in which truly was involved the independence of Europe, there was but one man deeply and sincerely interested, and that was the Prince of Orange. At the close of 1677 he made a great stride

* Document from D. G. in Rousset.

CHAP. XXXI.

towards acquiring a powerful ally, by marrying a daughter of the Stuarts. But the increase of power thus obtained was fully counterbalanced by the resuscitation of the De Witt party in Holland, and the consequent clamour of it and of the populace for peace. Temple expostulated with the Pensionary Fagel, and asked, how he expected that Holland should endure if the powerful empire of France extended to the Rhine. Fagel represented that old jealous trading party, which always refused to make Flanders part of the republic, out of jealousy to Antwerp, and which preferred the alliance of a military country like France to that of a commercial one like England. He replied, that as Flanders would certainly be lost by continuing the war, it was better to cede it by a peace, and that after "Flanders was lost, the Dutch must so live with France as would make them find it their interest rather to preserve their state than destroy it."* In other words, Pensionary Fagel was for making Holland a mere dependency on France.

Thus was it, that although the Dutch and the Prince of Orange had repelled and defeated Louis from the conquest of the national territories, the power and obstinacy of the French monarch had subdued the heart of the Dutch civilians. They were bent on a separate peace, determined to ignore the emperor, sacrifice Spain, and give up to France the better part of Flanders. It was his own countrymen that the Prince of Orange had to combat even more than the French; though without doubt the craven spirit shown by the Dutch was in some measure owing to the repeated ill-success of William's efforts as a commander.

Louis saw that his hold over the Dutch was based on fear. To maintain and augment it, he marched ere the winter of the first month of 1778 was over, and laid siege to Ghent. The Dutch had always feared that no great Flemish city could stand a siege, its large population

* Temple.

caring nothing for a Spanish sovereign, and even preferring a French. Ghent surrendered. Ypres shared the same fate, and Louis withdrew to Versailles, to give the foe time for reflection. Moreover, though it might be good policy to increase the alarm of the Dutch, it was dangerous to swell the rising fear and choler of the English to an explosion. And for this reason, amongst others, Louis held his hand.

In the meantime Charles the Second continued to vacillate as usual, now cringing to France for money and protection, now menacing it to humour the passions of his subjects. The task which he preferred, was no doubt that of being an easy pensioner on Louis's bounty, but the revenues of the great monarch were exhausted, and though willing to purchase English adherence, he began to higgle for the prize. Charles had now found a minister in Danby, who was full of independence, who thought that more money might be had honourably from parliament than dishonourably from Louis, and who from time to time brought his sovereign round to entertain and act upon this opinion. More influential than even Danby was the conviction, entertained even by Charles's brother, the Duke of York, that if France were allowed to acquire Flanders, the English would revolt.* To escape from this, Charles had offered his mediation, and pressed for a safe and honourable peace. To facilitate this, as well as to make a personal friend of the Prince of Orange, Charles, towards the close of 1677, gave him his niece in marriage. This scarcely furthered the king's object, for it necessarily rendered Charles more exigent towards France, whilst leaving William equally inflexible to the blandishments of Charles.

The great difference between the negotiators lay as to where the frontier should be. Louis offered to cede

* So James told Barillon.

CHAP. XXXI.

Oudenarde, Limburg, and Maestricht, whilst keeping Artois and Cambray, and making Valenciennes, Condé, Courtray, and Tournay the frontier. In replying to this offer, made at the close of 1677, Charles, under William's influence, insisted on the French giving up the towns on the Scheldt, Condé and Valenciennes. This broke off negotiations, and Hyde, the English agent at the Hague, signed a treaty of alliance between England and Holland, for resisting the exorbitant pretensions of France. Charles seemed in earnest; 30,000 men were to be sent to Ostend; and parliament was summoned in order to vote their supplies for a war which they knew to be popular. Thus threatened, the wily Louis turned the full force of blandishment and corruption from the English court to the English parliament, bribing, it is to be feared, some of its best men, and insinuating that if Charles became master of an English army he would employ it against English liberties. The British patriots, to the discredit both of their judgment and their honesty, swallowed the coarse bait which Barillon, the French envoy, held out to them. Instead of seconding the rare impulse of Charles to defend the independence of Flanders, they refused him supplies, and insulted him with injurious and mistrustful votes. On this the king, disgusted, fell back to his old policy of getting money from the French king, in return for signing a secret treaty of acquiescence and alliance.*

Charles, however, did not take this decisive step merely upon the assurance that his own parliament and the liberal party opposed him. He also was made aware that the Dutch themselves were abandoning their own cause and his. The republican faction objected to the late treaty with England, and especially to a certain suspicious clause in it by which Charles and William agreed to lend mutual aid in case of domestic disturbance.

* State Papers, France, 296.

Louis's agents had been as busy and as lavish at the Hague as in London and no sooner had they acquired the conviction that the Dutch would accept Louis's proposals, than the latter publicly proposed them in the shape of an ultimatum for the acceptance of which a few weeks were given, and the term fixed in May.

The conditions were no other than those offered to England in the last month of the preceding year, and refused by it and by Holland. Louis insisted on keeping Condé, Valenciennes, and Courtray, as well as Ypres, his recent conquest. But he consented to give up Ghent, as well as Cambray, Charleroi, Oudenarde, and Limburg. Maestricht he gave up to Holland. The Dutch community at once showed their desire to accept these terms, which the Prince of Orange and the noble class of the Dutch strove in vain to reject. An alert in the neighbourhood of Maestricht, which brought Louis to his army, alarmed the Dutch towns still more. The English court wavering at the same time, the Prince of Orange could resist no longer; and Holland signed a truce, making a separate peace with France, at the end of May, leaving Spain and the emperor to follow the example or continue the war alone. Even then the peace was not quite secure, for on the 24th of June Louis signified at Nimeguen, that he could not give up the towns he had promised to evacuate until the demands of Sweden upon Brandenburg were satisfied. This demand appeared exorbitant and unfair. The English were for arming, and even the Dutch prepared, to the great joy of the Prince of Orange, to resume hostilities. The negotiators at Nimeguen did not, however, relax their exertions; and the Swedes themselves, far from seeking to have the war prolonged for their peculiar sakes, begged Louis not to withdraw his signature from the treaty with Holland. They argued, that the German enemies of Sweden could not resist the commands of France. In this the Swedes were correct, and the French and Dutch negotiators

CHAP. XXXI.

signed the Treaty of Nimeguen on the 10th of August, 1678.

Three days later the Prince of Orange, still ignorant of it, though an ordinary courier might have made the journey in less than a day, attacked the lines of the Duke of Luxemburg, before Mons, and fought one of those regrettable engagements which sometimes take place between the signature of a peace and its promulgation. Four or five thousand men were thus sacrificed. In a few days after a truce was concluded with Spain, and the republic coalesced with the empire. The German powers came later to an agreement with France, and joined the general Treaty of Nimeguen early in the ensuing year of 1679.

The peace of Nimeguen had at least this advantage over the preceding one of Aix-la-Chapelle, that the Flemish frontier, which it was most important to guard against French ambition, was fixed by a line of demarcation, which might be considered definitive, instead of running in and out, and leaving fortresses almost excluded from the country to which they belonged. The frontier was such, as might be expected to abide. Thus Charleroi, Courtray, Oudenarde, and Ath, which France retained by the agreement of Aix, it restored to Spain at Nimeguen, along with more recent conquests, such as Limburg and Ghent. But France obtained the permanent cession from Spain of the important towns of St. Omers, Cambray, Valenciennes, Condé, Ypres, and Maubeuge, which, with the exception of Ypres and Poperingue now Belgian, continue to constitute the French frontier at the present day. Louis was moreover to have Dinant or Charlemont, in order to defend the entrance of the valley of the Meuse. Maestricht, which ought to have been restored to Spain, was given to and retained by the Dutch, who emerged rather gainers from the terrible war which was intended to crush them—a result, however, which the republic

obtained by totally sacrificing Spain, after having dragged it into the war on its behalf. The Dutch obtained, moreover, the virtual abrogation of the French differential tonnage duty, as well as the high duties of 1667. These with regard to Holland, as previously had been granted to the English, were reduced to the rates of 1664.*

When Spain acquiesced in the treaty, being in no condition to carry on the war alone, there was little to add to the stipulations already concluded with the Dutch, save the restoration of Puycerda in Catalonia. Spain's acceptance left, said Temple, "the peace of the empire wholly at the mercy and discretion of France, and the restitution of Lorraine (which all had consented in) wholly abandoned and unprovided." The war, suspended on the Meuse and Scheldt, continued during the summer of 1678, upon the Rhine. The Duke of Lorraine was offered to the Maréchal Crequy, their armies manœuvring and skirmishing through the defiles of the Black Forest. Crequy wanted to attack Strasburg, which, a kind of imperial republic, favoured the German cause. Crequy took Kehl, its *tête de pont* on the opposite side of the river, as well as certain outposts of the city itself. But the king forbade Crequy to push the enterprise further, not wishing to interrupt negotiation by the capture of so important a town, which he knew must be his, if he remained in possession of Alsace.

The emperor had still more urgent reasons for desiring peace. Pressed by Tekeli and the insurgent Hungarians, as well as threatened by the Poles, he professed himself ready, in the autumn of 1678, to accept the offer of France, and allow them to keep Freyburg, westward of the Rhone, provided they gave up Philipsburg. The conditions of the treaty of Westphalia

* Dumont. Traité de Nimegue; Basnage, Temple's Memoirs: Bolingbroke's Sketches of the History of Europe. Mignet. Œuvres de Louis XIV. State Papers, France, 296.

CHAP. XXXI.

formed the principal basis of the accord at Nimeguen between France and Germany. France offered nominally to restore the Duke of Lorraine to his estates. But as Louis insisted on keeping or garrisoning Nancy, its capital, the duke refused to return or be a party to the treaty. The consequence of the premature and isolated signature of the treaty by the Dutch was the abandonment of the Elector of Brandenburg, and the other German princes, to the dictation of France. That elector had ejected Sweden from North Germany, and taken its place as the first Protestant power in that country. Louis now undertook to reverse this, make Brandenburg disgorge, and restore Sweden to its old position. The Dutch should have provided for such an event, and when they had neglected to do so, it was not to be expected that the emperor should prolong the war for the interest of powers who as often opposed as aided him. Brandenburg showed a determination to resist, until a French army, under Marshal Crequy, marched to the invasion of his territories. The elector was obliged to submit for the present, but the compulsion left a grudge which may be considered the beginning of the during hostility between Prussia and France.

In this and in the years which immediately followed, the power of France and the glory of Louis the Fourteenth attained their zenith. Both had, indeed, received a rude check in the failure to subjugate Holland, and the necessity of coming to terms with it. But still France had gained that position and formidable row of fortresses in Flanders, which, though henceforth forbidden to advance, at least sufficed to stem the attacks of the most powerful coalition. In the east France had attained the Rhine, on which Strasburg was already an easy and assured prey. Beyond this limit France was unable to advance for the century during which the monarchy still endured. The ambition of Louis, indeed, continued to augment, as did his

military efforts in the same proportion, but his endeavours were powerless to do more than hold his own, and even to do this required an exhaustion of resources, and a destruction of the vitality of the monarchy, if not of the country, which brought on premature decrepitude, and made the remainder of its history but the record of its decline.

END OF THE THIRD VOLUME.

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